

New  
Updated  
author's  
Edition!

Vladimir Megre



# Anastasia

I exist for those I exist for

**Vladimir Nikolaevich Megre**

# **Anastasia**

**«The Ringing Cedars of Russia»  
book series**

2013

A New Updated author's Edition!

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# CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	6
PERESTROIKA.....	7
THE RINGING CEDAR.....	20
MEETING.....	43
MAN OR BEAST?.....	53
WHO ARE THEY?.....	58
A FOREST BEDROOM.....	64
ANASTASIA'S MORNING.....	66
ANASTASIA'S RAY.....	71
CONCERT IN THE TAIGA.....	81
WHO WILL LIGHT A NEW STAR.....	90
HER BELOVED SUMMER PEOPLE.....	108
FROM THE ADVICE OF ANASTASIA.....	113
The Seed Is a Doctor.....	113
Who Bees Sting.....	119
"Hello, Morning!".....	125
Evening Routine.....	127
He Prepares Everything Himself.....	128
DREAMING UNDER YOUR STAR.....	132
STAR WOMAN.....	135
YOUR CHILD'S HELPER AND TEACHER.....	144
FOREST SCHOOL.....	152
ATTENTION TO MAN.....	157
FLYING SAUCER? NOTHING SPECIAL.....	164
THE BRAIN IS A SUPERCOMPUTER.....	171
"... IN HIM WAS LIFE; AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN ..."	183
YOU NEED TO CHANGE YOUR WORLD-VIEW.....	188
MORTAL SIN.....	192
TOUGHING PARADISE.....	198
WHO RAISES OUR SON?.....	204
ACROSS A SPAN OF TIME.....	210

<b>AN ODD YOUNG WOMAN.....</b>	<b>212</b>
<b>BUGS.....</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>DREAMS ARE THE CREATION OF THE FUTURE.....</b>	<b>228</b>
<b>ACROSS THE DARK FORGES' SPAN OF TIME.....</b>	<b>244</b>
<b>STRONG PEOPLE.....</b>	<b>258</b>
<b>WHO ARE YOU, ANASTASIA?.....</b>	<b>272</b>
<b>AN APPEAL FROM VLADIMIR MEGRE TO HIS READERS.....</b>	<b>280</b>

## FOREWORD

*«Not being a writer, without any experience in writing creatively, I have to apologize to my readers for the narrative style. This book does not belong to social and political journalism or fiction, fantastic or adventure stories. In spite of all the phenomenal and fantastic events which have been described. I have failed to determine its genre. This book is a story about an unordinary woman possessing a gift of healing a soul and a body of a man.»*

*Vladimir Megre*

# PERESTROIKA

With the start of perestroika in Russia in 1990, people were suddenly allowed to start their own private businesses.

For the peoples of the Soviet Union, where entrepreneurship had been considered a crime punishable by law, up to and including imprisonment, this decision was revolutionary.

Approximately a third of the population, especially in the capital and major cities, was inspired to dream of a self-defined future that resembled the happy and luxurious life of Western millionaires.

Novosibirsk, where I was living at that time, was three thousand kilometers from the Soviet Union's capital, Moscow, but even its inhabitants did their best to keep up with those in the capital in setting up businesses of their own.

The businesses of Siberia's first entrepreneurs were primarily small. They offered consumer services, engaged in small retail trade, and opened small cafés and shops. Those able to obtain used but good equipment, install it in some half-basement, and start producing the plastic jew-

elry fashionable at the time were practically considered industrialists.

I was lucky. I was able to charter the three largest passenger ships of the western Siberian river shipping line. I used one of these—a triple-decker with a restaurant, bar, and conference room—for pleasure cruises and held conferences on them for Siberian entrepreneurs.

By that time I had been elected president of Siberian Co-operator, an interregional association of entrepreneurs.

I considered myself a successful and fortunate entrepreneur. However, there were also major problems. Some in society did not like the new businessmen.

At the beginning of perestroika, Russian society split into two seemingly irreconcilable parts. Some wanted to engage in private business, and seeing nothing bad in the capitalist system, wanted to live in a society on the Western model.

Then there were the veterans of war and labor who categorically rejected the innovations in the country. They were not hard to understand, either.

Before perestroika began, an elderly man, often a veteran of the front or a hero of socialist labor, would put on his medals on holidays and walk in a parade. He would speak to young people in schools. He considered his life worthy of respect and properly lived, to the good of social-



ist society. Now suddenly, everything had changed drastically, and it turned out they had been building the wrong society. They should have been building a capitalist, not a socialist one. They had been wrong to overthrow the Russian tsar in 1917 and execute his entire family. This old man's decorations now attested not to his valor but to the fact that he had stood on the front lines to construct what society did not need. How could such a man look his children and grandchildren in the eye now? People like this attended rallies at the beginning of perestroika.

One day I happened to be part of just such a rally.

During negotiations with businessmen from Turkey, my secretary told me that a spontaneous rally was assembling near the offices of the Novosibirsk Regional Committee of the Communist Party and they were shouting slogans against entrepreneurs. I apologized to the Turkish delegation and decided to take a group of my colleagues to the rally. We were afraid that after the rally the crowd would start smashing private shashlyk stands and little shops.

"You should change clothes," one of my colleagues advised me. "If the crowd sees us in our business suits, they'll be even more bitter."

"I should, but there's no time."

So we drove to the rally in two cars, an imported Mer-

cedes and a Russian UAZ SUV. We got out of our cars wearing our elegant suits, white shirts, and ties, and I looked basically like a London dandy in my elegant white suit. We stood there watching the ralliers and not knowing what to do.

There were fifteen hundred or two thousand of them. Red flags waved over the crowd. The slogans: "We won't allow capitalism." "Entrepreneurs are sucking the people's blood." "Hold traitors to the party's cause responsible." An elderly man with medals on his chest was speaking with rage and anguish on an improvised stage.

"Our generation has been betrayed! Our entire generation! Our generation! We shed blood in the trenches. We kept the fascist scum from seizing our homeland. We went hungry and lived in tents, but we built plants and factories. We built cities. We built socialism and dreamed of communism."

Every once in a while an invalid on crutches would add his assent: "We did not spare ourselves."

Two old women chorused, "Pension! Pension!"

It was obvious the shouts from the crowd were getting the speaker worked up.

"We will stop the bloodsuckers and the bourgeois. You can't even buy meat in the market because it's all been bought up for their shashlyk stands. Let's smash their

kiosks like hydra nests," he challenged.

The crowd chorused, "Smash them! Smash them! Smash them!"

"We built our lives for our children, not them"—and he gestured toward our group.

All the ralliers turned in our direction. Silence fell. The crowd seemed poised to pounce in our direction.

Then I grabbed the megaphone and climbed onto the SUV's roof, not yet knowing what I was going to say. So I began without preface.

"You say you worked for your children, and here we are—your children. We decided to become entrepreneurs. And build a life no worse than in America. The law now allows us to engage in private business. Thank you for your efforts, but what you built doesn't really suit us, and we want to build something of our own. But if you start smashing things, you won't get any pension at all because we're the ones contributing the money for your pension. Entrepreneurs are not bloodsuckers. Entrepreneurs are people who are trying to do something sensible for the country, and for themselves, naturally."

The man speaking on stage did not have his megaphone, so to interrupt me he had to shout.

"There he is! Look! The marshal of those who are sucking the people's blood! They're the ones who swept all the

food off our shelves. They're the ones buying up our meat and then selling shashlyk for triple. In three days we were out of meat."

In response I said calmly through the megaphone, "You're something else, muzhik. You mean to say you worked and worked all your life, and you only got enough meat for three days?"

The shouts from the crowd stopped. People were listening to our dialog, their heads swiveling to face whoever was speaking. The man on stage did not try to respond to my argument. Instead of an answer he shouted, "Drag him down from the car, that bloodsucker of the people. Look at how the bastard's all dressed up."

All kinds of things started flying in my direction from the crowd. Two pickled tomatoes and an egg hit my white suit. And a pickled tomato hit me in the head. The police present at the rally formed a rank between the crowd and the car whose roof I was standing on. The police commander yelled to me, "Climb down from the car, fella, and run away. We won't be able to hold the crowd back."

But I didn't want to retreat, and I shouted into the megaphone, "Do you want your children to go around in tatters like you? You mean that's what you were fighting for?"

A few people broke from the crowd and through the line

of police, ran toward the car, and started rocking it. And right then—I don't even know how this happened myself—I started reciting Mayakovsky's poem about Lenin:

*It's time!  
I begin my tale of Lenin.  
Not that there's no greater grief,  
But because anguish now  
Is a clear and conscious pain.  
It's time!  
Lenin's slogans in the whirlwind.  
Shall we weep a pool of tears?  
Lenin lives more now than everyone alive.  
Our banner is our strength and weapon.*

The crowd froze in surprise. The people rocking the vehicle froze and raised their heads. At that moment a vodka truck was moving slowly down the side, straight across the grass, and my colleagues and I decided to chip in and treat the crowd to vodka. As the vehicle drove toward me, I continued to recite:

*People are boats.  
But on dry land.  
Live your life for today,*

*Dirty shells will  
Cling to your sides.  
But later, you will break through,  
Calm the storm  
And be close to the sun,  
Scrub your beard green with driftweed  
And crimson with jellyfish slime.  
Like Lenin I scrub myself!  
To sail on into revolution.*

The vodka truck drove right up to my vehicle, and I leapt to the back of the truck, where I said, "Only you see we have bad luck, muzhiks. Different revolutions suit different folks."

The speaker started shouting again.

"Can't you see? He's mocking us. He recited the poem about Lenin so everyone would stop thinking clearly. And you did, right away."

"I worked hard to memorize poems in school. I worked hard at reciting them, too, to show that our generation knows about our fathers' aspirations, too. But you have to try to understand our aspirations as well."

"In one fell swoop he's gulled everyone with his poem, that exploiter hydra, that bloodsucker of the people. Why are you standing there silent? Crush, destroy the hydra."

He hid behind Lenin and poetry."

Some of the crowd let up a roar and once again started trying to break through the police shield.

"I recited poetry so we could start a normal conversation. Come up, have a drink, and let's talk normally, Russian style."

I opened the side of the truck, sat down on a box, and opened a bottle of vodka, then a second, and poured vodka into little plastic cups. I picked up one cup and took a swig. I turned to those who had broken through the cordon and rocked the SUV. They were already standing by the open truck.

"Go on, take it, muzhiks. Let's have a drop, or else we won't have a proper conversation."

The men started snapping up the cups.

"Really, why have tempers gone so high? We can talk normally," a short bearded man remarked, and his comrade added, "Why not have a talk if the company's right?" Turning toward the policemen holding back the crowd, one of the men who'd had a drink said, "You muzhiks hang on a little bit, or they'll break through and won't let us talk normally."

"No, they won't. What kind of conversation can you have with a crowd? It's just a lot of noise, that's all," people supported him.

"We repeat now that we'll help you."

"You should be helping the soldiers. Pour another," they suggested.

I poured more vodka.

"So, what other poems do you know?" a very tall bald man asked me in a bass voice.

"By heart? Just from the school curriculum," I replied.

"Well, recite one from the school curriculum, and I'll sing along into the microphone. Whenever I drink I always feel like singing."

"A sail of white, alone, in the sea's blue fog," I recited, and the bald man began to sing in a powerful bass amplified by the megaphone.

*A sail of white, alone,  
In the sea's blue fog.  
Seeking what in a distant land?  
Losing what in his father's home?*

The crowd broke the police cordon. A large group consisting mainly of men ran toward the truck.

The sturdy bald man stopped singing and shouted in a threatening bass, "Get in line! This is a normal conversation, not just a lot of noise."

Those who had run up started getting in line.



The speaker on the stage opposite started talking again, addressing the people remaining in front of him. "Look, people, he's getting the people drunk. Women! He's getting your men drunk."

A rumble of dissatisfied voices rose from the crowd, which consisted mainly of elderly women.

Once again I picked up the megaphone and addressed the women.

"Forgive me, women, I clean forgot. On the other side of the square is a vehicle with imported chicken legs, a present for you from the union of entrepreneurs. This is not a bribe, it's a fee so we can have a breather and you don't stop the discussion. Of course, one truck's worth isn't enough for everyone—there you're right—but some of you will get something for free."

A large group of women, some walking quickly, some running, headed for the truck with the chicken legs. In this way the ralliers were divided into two groups: one by the vodka truck, the other by the chicken leg truck. I realized people had calmed down. My colleagues and I got in our cars and drove to my ship.

As I was walking away from the vodka drinkers I heard, "Not a bad muzhik, and we nearly crippled him."

When the ship was moored at the river station, its restaurant was used as a club for entrepreneurs. Older and

younger people often met there, discussed business, and shared their experience. Nearly everyone felt as if an unusually beautiful life was in the offing. Sometimes one of the skeptics would try to throw cold water on these glorious dreams.

One day the man who had spoken at the rally came to the ship. The guard wouldn't let him on, and he began demanding to speak with me. So I went out to see him, and we introduced ourselves. His name was Pyotr Ivanovich, and he asked permission to visit our club.

"But why come to our club, Pyotr Ivanovich, if you're opposed to entrepreneurship and private property?"

He replied, "I'm opposed to what is absurd in life. I want to express my opinion to you, today's avant-garde. Or are you afraid to listen to an alternative opinion?"

One of my colleagues suggested, "Oh, let him come and speak his mind. That'll be better than calling rallies and getting people all worked up."

I agreed.

Pyotr Ivanovich began coming every week. We agreed he would speak no more than five minutes. He turned out to be a former history and philosophy teacher. His speeches at the entrepreneurs' club on the ship were of little interest to anyone, but sometimes they made me give long hard thought to the meaning of life.

One day, as usual, he went up to the microphone and said to the entrepreneurs sitting at the restaurant tables, "Why do you think you're making yourselves into future happy men? Over in America, people have been doing business for a long time, and they have more entrepreneurs than we do in Russia. Maybe we'll reach the American standard of living in twenty years or so, but in those twenty years they'll pull out even farther ahead of us. There'll be more entrepreneurs in Russia, but that doesn't mean there will be more happy people."

At that time, at the beginning of perestroika, our first-wave entrepreneurs couldn't have cared less about the meaning of life. We just wanted to live well.

## THE RINGING CEDAR

In spring 1994 I took my ships on a four-month commercial expedition down Siberia's Ob River, from Novosibirsk to Salekhard, a town above the Arctic Circle. The expedition's purpose was to establish economic ties with the regions of the Far North.

The expedition was called the Merchant Caravan. Our large triple-decker ship held the caravan's headquarters, an exhibit of what Siberia's entrepreneurs were producing, and a store. And my quarters, quite stylish for those times. We had combined two first-class cabins and furnished them with modern pieces in order to impress when we were conducting negotiations.

My caravan was to travel three and a half thousand kilometers to the north and stop at both relatively large settlements—Tomsk, Nizhnevartovsk, Khanty-Mansiisk, and Salekhard—as well as ones so small they could only be reached with freight during the brief navigable period.

In the winter, the Ob River ices over. Communication between the towns and the residents of Siberian settlements comes to a halt.

Afternoons, the caravan's ships docked at points of set-

tlement. The crew blew the ship's whistles and then pumped loud music through powerful speakers on the upper deck, attracting the inhabitants.

We traded, bought valuable fish from the local population and the gifts of the Siberian taiga—whortleberries, dried mushrooms, and furs—and discussed establishing permanent economic ties with local hunters and fishermen.

The ships traveled at night, as a rule. If bad weather prevented us from continuing along the river, the headquarters ship would moor at the nearest point of settlement and we would hold a party for the local youth. Events like that were a rarity there. The clubs and houses of culture had become quite ramshackle over the previous years, and almost no cultural events were being held.

You can only imagine the response.

Inhabitants of a Siberian village thousands of kilometers from civilization see a beauty of a white ship sailing along the river and suddenly it turns and moors at their shore.

The ship has a restaurant, a bar, and a dance hall with columns.

Not only all the young people but all the adults as well would rush to go on board, take a three-hour cruise, and then see the white beauty off, waving from shore.

The farther the caravan got from the big towns and the

closer to the Arctic Circle, the broader the Ob got, and through binoculars you could observe wild animals on its shores.

Sometimes we did not encounter a single even tiny point of settlement in twenty-four hours of sailing. Nothing but taiga along the banks of the river, which was the sole transportation artery for many kilometers.

At the time, I did not yet know that at one of these kilometers a meeting awaited me that would change my entire life.

One day on our way back to Novosibirsk, I had our floating headquarters moor at a tiny village consisting of just a few small houses, tens of kilometers from any large points of settlement. We planned to stop for three hours so that the ship's crew could walk on land, the local residents could buy various goods and foods, and we could buy their wild taiga plants and fish cheaply.

I decided to take a walk on land as well. As I was going down the gangway, I couldn't help but notice two old men standing in silence off to one side of the group of local inhabitants planning to climb the gangway onto the ship.

The older man had a gray beard and was wearing a canvas cape that went down to his heels and a hood that covered his head and looked especially odd. As I walked past the old men I said hello. The elder said nothing to me

in reply, merely bowed his head slightly, but his companion greeted me.

"Hello. May your good intentions come to pass. I sense you're in charge here. Right? Can you give orders?"

"Yes, if they're sensible," I replied, and I was about to proceed on my way.

But the old man continued.

He tried to talk me into giving him fifty or so men (the ship's crew totaled sixty-five in all) for him to take into the taiga, twenty-five kilometers from where the ship was moored. Take them deep into the taiga to cut down a ringing cedar, as they put it. A cedar that, according to him, reached forty meters high. He proposed cutting it up into pieces that could be carried to the ship. We had to collect all of it without fail. The old man advised cutting each part into even smaller pieces, each taking one for ourselves, and giving the rest out to our families, acquaintances, and anyone who wanted one as a gift. The old man said this was a special cedar. The piece of it had to be worn on the chest, on a string. Moreover, you had to put it on while standing barefoot in the grass and with your left hand pressed to your bared chest. A minute later you would feel a pleasant warmth emanating from the cedar, and then a light shudder would pass through your body. From time to time, when the desire arose, you would

need to use your fingertips to polish the side of the piece of cedar that did not touch the body, holding it with your thumbs on the other side. The old man confidently asserted that three months later the person possessing the piece of ringing cedar would feel a significant improvement in his well-being and would be healed of many diseases.

"Even AIDS?" I asked, after telling them briefly what I knew from the press about this disease.

The old man answered confidently, "Any disease!"

In his opinion, however, this was an easy task. The main thing was that the person possessing this piece would become better, luckier, and abler.

I knew a little about the healing properties of our Siberian taiga cedar, but for it to affect our emotions and abilities—at the time that seemed highly improbable. I thought, "Maybe the old men want to get some money from me for this, what they consider an unusual cedar." I began explaining to them that in the "outside world," in order to be liked, women wear jewelry made of gold and silver, and they wouldn't pay for a piece of wood, so I was not going to agree to any costs.

"They wear it not knowing," the answer followed. "Gold is dust compared with one little piece of this cedar, but we don't need any money for it, we can give you mushrooms,



dried ones, too, but we don't need anything."

Deciding not to argue, out of respect for their age, I said, "Well, maybe someone would wear a piece of your cedar if a master carver put his hand to it and created something unusually beautiful."

To this the old man replied, "You can carve it, but it's better to polish it. And much better if you polish it yourself, with your own fingers, when that person's soul wants to, and then the cedar will be beautiful on the outside, too."

At this, the slightly younger old man quickly unbuttoned first his old jacket and then his shirt and showed me what he had on his chest. I saw a convex circle or oval. The colors in it were variegated—violet, crimson, a rust color—and comprised a puzzling drawing, and the veins of the tree looked like rivulets.

I'm no connoisseur of works of art, although I have had occasion to visit a few art galleries. World masterpieces have never summoned up any special emotion in me, but what was hanging on this old man's chest called up significantly greater feelings and emotions than a visit to the Tretyakov Gallery. I asked the old man, "How many years have you been polishing your piece of cedar?"

"Ninety-three," the old man replied.

"And how old are you?"

"One hundred nineteen."

At the time I did not believe his answer. The old man looked about seventy-five. Oblivious to my doubts, or not paying them any mind, the old man, who was a little excited, began trying to convince me that a piece of cedar polished only by the person himself would be beautiful to others, too, in three years. Then it would get better and better, especially for women. A pleasant, beneficial fragrance would come from its possessor's body incomparable to anything created artificially by man!

A very pleasant fragrance was indeed coming from the old men. I smelled it, even though I smoke and, like all smokers, my sense of smell has probably dulled.

There was one other oddity about the old men.

I suddenly began noticing in these strangers' speech phrases uncharacteristic of inhabitants of the North's remotest areas. I remember specific ones even today, even with their intonations.

The old man said, "God created the cedar as a reservoir for the energy of the Cosmos.

"A man in the state of love gives off an emission. In a fraction of a second it reflects off the planets sailing above the person and once more reaches Earth, giving life to everything alive.

"The Sun is one of the planets that reflects far from the

full spectrum of this emission.

"Only emissions of the forces of light go from the person into the Cosmos. And only a beneficial emission returns from the Cosmos to Earth.

"A dark emission comes from someone abiding under the influence of pernicious feelings. A dark emission cannot ascend but rather falls deep into the Earth. After it is reflected off the bowels of the Earth it returns to the surface in the form of volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and wars.

"The highest achievement of a reflected dark emission is the effect on man of its rays, which strengthen the pernicious feelings directly inside him.

"The cedar lives for five hundred and fifty years. Its millions of needles catch and accumulate light energy, its entire spectrum, day and night. During the cedar's lifetime, all the bodies that reflect the energy of the forces of light pass over it.

"Even a small cedar has more energy that is beneficial to man than all the man-made energy installations on Earth put together.

"The cedar takes in the energy that comes from man and through the Cosmos, stores it, and, at the right moment, gives it back. Gives it back when there is not enough of it in the Cosmos, which means in man and everything living and growing on Earth.

"One encounters cedars—but very rarely—that store the accumulated energy but do not give it back. After five hundred years of life they begin to ring. That is how they speak, with their quiet ringing. That is how they signal for people to take them, to cut them down so that the accumulated energy can be used on Earth. And so this cedar has been asking with its ringing. It's been asking for three years. If it doesn't make physical contact with living people, then in three years it loses its chance to give up what it has accumulated through the Cosmos, loses its chance to give it back to man directly. Then it starts burning the energy inside itself. This tortuous burning and dying takes twenty-seven years.

"Not long ago we discovered a cedar like that. We determined it had already been ringing for two years — ringing softly, very softly. It might be trying to stretch its request out for a longer time, but it has only one year left. It has to be cut down and distributed to people."

The old man spoke for a long time, and for some reason I listened. The odd old Siberian's voice first was calmly confident, then very agitated, and when he was agitated, he would polish his piece of cedar with his fingertips quickly, as if fingering some musical instrument.

It was cold on shore and an autumn wind was blowing off the river. The cold wind raked the gray hair on the old

man's uncovered head in bursts, but his old jacket and shirt remained unbuttoned. His fingertips kept polishing his piece of cedar, which hung on his chest open to the wind. He was trying to explain its full significance.

Lidia Petrovna, an employee in my firm, came off the ship and onto shore. She said everyone had already gathered on board, they were ready to sail, and they were waiting for me to finish my conversation. I said goodbye to the old men and quickly boarded. I could not satisfy their request for two reasons: delaying the ship, and for three full days, would have meant a huge loss; and at the time I ascribed everything the old men said to excessive superstition.

The next morning, during our planning meeting, I suddenly saw Lidia Petrovna fingering a piece of cedar on her chest. Later she told me that when I had gone on board she had hung back a little. As I began to walk away, she saw the old man look, distraught, first at me as I left and then at his older companion.

He repeated agitatedly, "How can that be? Why didn't they realize? I don't know how to speak their language at all. I couldn't convince him. I couldn't! Nothing I said worked! Nothing worked. Why? Tell me, father."

The elder of the two old men placed his hand on his son's shoulder and replied calmly, "You were not convin-

cing, my son. That is why they did not realize."

"When I was already going up the gangway," Lidia Petrovna continued, "the old man who'd been talking to you suddenly ran up to me, grabbed me by the arm, and led me down the gangway onto the grass.

"He hastily took the string to which this piece of cedar wood was attached out of his pocket, put it around my neck, and pressed it with my own hand to my chest. I even felt a shudder in my body. He did it all so very quickly, I never had a chance to say anything to him. As I was walking away he repeated after me, 'Safe travels! Be happy! Please, come here next year! All the best, people. We'll be waiting for you! Safe travels!'

"When the ship cast off, the old man waved for a long time and then suddenly sat down on the grass. I watched them through my binoculars. I saw the old man you'd been talking to, who had later given me the piece of cedar, sitting on the grass and his shoulders quaking. The older one, with the long beard, was leaning over him and stroking his head.

\* \* \*

Immersed in my commercial concerns, bookkeeping, and banquets celebrating the conclusion of our travels, I forgot all about the strange old Siberians.

When the ship returned to Novosibirsk I experienced acute pains and was given a diagnosis of a duodenal ulcer and osteochondrosis of my thoracic spine.

In the quiet of my comfortable hospital ward, I was cut off from the daily bustle. My deluxe private room gave me a chance to calmly analyze the results of my four-month expedition and compile a business plan for the future. But my memory seemed to push all the events away and for some reason brought to the fore the old men and what they'd said.

At my request the hospital got me all the literature there was on the cedar tree.

Comparing what I read with what I'd heard on the expedition from the old Siberians, I was increasingly struck by and began to believe what the old men had said. If there was some truth in what they'd said, could all of it have been the truth?

The books on folk medicine said a lot about the cedar's healing properties. They said that all of it, from its needles to its bark, possessed highly effective healing properties. The Siberian cedar's wood is beautiful and can be put to good use by master craftsmen, and furniture and sounding

boards for musical instruments can be made from it. The cedar's needles possess a high level of phytoncides and the ability to easily decontaminate the ambient air. The cedar's wood has a characteristic, very pleasant balsamic fragrance. A small piece of cedar in a home drives away moths.

The popular scientific literature also indicated that the quality of cedars that grow in northern regions is significantly higher than that of those in more southerly regions.

In 1792 Academician P. S. Pallas wrote that the fruits of the Siberian cedar effectively restored male virility and returned a person's youth, significantly increased the organism's resistance, and helped him withstand many diseases.

There were also many historical phenomena directly or indirectly linked to the cedar. Here is one of them.

In 1907 the semiliterate muzhik Grigory Rasputin, who came from a remote Siberian village, an area where the Siberian cedar grows, arrived in the capital of St. Petersburg at the age of fifty and astounded even the imperial family, to which he gained entrée, with his predictions. He possessed extraordinary virility. When they tried to kill Grigory Rasputin, they were astounded that he continued to live after he had been riddled with bullets. Could this have been because he grew up on the cedar's nuts in a ce-



dar region?

This is how journalists of the day assessed his stamina:

"At age fifty, he could start an orgy at midday and keep up his carousing until four in the morning. He would go from debauchery and drunkenness straight to church matins, where he would stand in prayer until eight o'clock in the morning. Then, at home, after tea, Grishka would receive visitors until two in the afternoon, as if nothing had happened. Then he would select some ladies and go with them to the bathhouse, and from the bathhouse he would drive to a restaurant outside the city, where he would repeat the previous night. No ordinary person could withstand a routine like that."

Nonetheless, the numerous facts and proofs pale before the most important thing, which you can learn for yourself and after which I was left without a shadow of doubt: the Bible. In the Old Testament, in the third book of Moses (Leviticus 14:4), God teaches how to heal people, even how to decontaminate a dwelling using . . . CEDAR!!!

When I compared the facts and information I had collected from various sources, a picture took shape such that the world's known miracles paled by comparison. The great mysteries that had disturbed men's minds began to seem trifling compared to the mystery of the ringing cedar. I could no longer have any doubt of its existence. The

popular scientific literature and the Old Testament dispelled my doubts.

The cedar is mentioned forty-two times in the Bible, in the Old Testament. The Old Testament Moses, who revealed to humanity the stone tablets, probably knew more about the cedar than is written in the Old Testament.

We are used to the fact of various plants in nature being capable of healing man's ailments. Cedar's healing properties are confirmed by the popular scientific literature and such serious and authoritative scientists as Academician P. S. Pallas, and this coincides with what the Old Testament says.

Now, pay attention!

The Old Testament points to the cedar and only the cedar and does not mention any other trees. Doesn't the Old Testament talk about how the cedar is the most powerful therapeutic agent that exists in nature? What is this? A medicinal complex? But how should it be used? And why had these strange old men chosen one ringing cedar out of all the cedars?

But this was still not all. The following Old Testament story talks about something immeasurably more puzzling.

King Solomon built a temple of cedar. In exchange for cedar from the Levant, he gave another king, Hiram, twenty towns of his own kingdom. Incredible! Twenty

towns for a certain kind of building material! True, he was rendered one other service as well. At King Solomon's request he was given men "able to hew the trees."

Who were these people? What did they know?

I'd heard that even now, in the remotest places, there were old men who had a special skill for choosing trees for construction. But then, more than two thousand years ago, everyone might have had that skill. It took special people, though. The temple was built. Services were held in it and "the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud."

What kind of cloud? Where did it come from and how did it get into the temple? What was it? Energy? Spirit? What manner of phenomenon was it, and what was its connection to the cedar?

The old men had spoken of the ringing cedar as a reservoir for some sort of energy.

Which cedar was more powerful, the Levant's or Siberia's?

Academician Pallas said that its healing properties increased as the growth approached the boundary with the forest tundra. That meant the Siberian was more powerful.

The Bible says, "You will know them by their fruits." That means the Siberian again!

Had no one ever paid any attention to all this before?

Hadn't someone compared these facts?

The Old Testament, the science of the last century, and modern science were one in their opinion of the cedar.

In *Living Ethics*, Elena Ivanovna Roerikh writes, "The chalice of cedar resin appeared long ago in the rituals of consecration of the kings of ancient Khorasan.

"The Druids also had a goblet of cedar resin, which was called the Chalice of Life. Only later was it replaced by blood, when the awareness of the Spirit was lost. Zoroastrian fire came from burning resin in a chalice."

So what—of all our forefathers' knowledge about the cedar, its properties, and its uses—has come down to our days and been preserved? Nothing at all? What did the old Siberians know about it?

All of a sudden, the memory surfaced of a situation from many years before that gave me gooseflesh. At the time, I'd lent it no significance, but now. . . .

At the beginning of perestroika, I, as president of the Siberian association of entrepreneurs, had had a call from the Novosibirsk Regional Executive Committee (in those days there were still Communist Party organizations) asking me to come meet with a major Western businessman. He had a letter of recommendation from the government. Present at the meeting were several entrepreneurs and re-

gional committee staff.

Judging by his appearance, the Western businessman was a tough and unusual man of the Oriental type. He was wearing a turban and expensive rings adorned his fingers.

We spoke, as usual, about opportunities for cooperation in various spheres. Among other things he said, "We might buy cedar nuts from you." As he said this he actually tensed up, and his sharp eyes darted, probably studying the reaction of the entrepreneurs present. I remembered this well because at the time I'd wondered why it was he had changed so.

After the official meeting the Muscovite interpreter accompanying him approached me. She said he wanted to speak with me.

The businessman proposed, confidentially, that I organize deliveries of cedar nuts for him, which had to be fresh, and in addition to the official price I would have a sizable percentage for myself.

I was supposed to deliver the nuts to Turkey, where they made some kind of oil. I said I would think it over.

I decided to find out what this oil was. And I did.

On the London stock exchange, the standard for world prices, cedar nut oil cost as much as five hundred dollars for one kilogram! We were being offered two or three dollars for a single kilogram of cedar nuts.

I called an entrepreneur I knew in Warsaw and asked him to find out whether there was any possibility of selling directly to the consumer of this product and to discover the technology for extracting the oil.

A month later he replied.

"No possible solution. I could not get hold of the technology. Also, these questions of yours generally have set in motion forces in the West best left alone and forgotten."

Then I went to an old acquaintance of mine, a researcher at our Novosibirsk Consumer Cooperative Institute, bought nuts, and financed the work. This institute's laboratories produced about a hundred kilograms of cedar nut oil.

I also hired people who discovered the following in archival documents.

During the prerevolutionary period and for a short while after the revolution, there was an organization in Siberia known as Siberian Cooperator. The people in this organization traded in oil, including cedar nut oil. They had fairly luxurious offices in Harbin, China, London, and New York, and fairly large sums of money in Western banks. After the revolution, this organization fell apart and many of its members emigrated.

Krasin, a member of the Bolshevik government, met with the organization's head and suggested that he return

to Russia, but the head of Siberian Cooperator replied that he would not help Russia anymore, now that he was outside its borders.

The archival materials also said that the cedar oil was made using wooden—and only wooden—presses in many of Siberia's taiga villages.

The high quality of the cedar oil depended on when the nuts were collected and processed.

We were unable to determine when this was, either in the archives or at the institute. The secret was lost.

The oil's healing properties have no analog. Might one of the émigrés have given the secret for manufacturing this oil to someone in the West?

What explained the fact that the immensely healing cedar nut grew in Siberia but the oil's production was in Turkey? After all, the cedar variety found in Siberia does not grow in Turkey at all.

What forces in the West was the Warsaw entrepreneur referring to? Why should I leave this question alone? Weren't these forces pumping this extraordinary healing product out of Russia's Siberian taiga?

If we had such wealth at home, with highly effective properties confirmed by centuries and millennia, why were we buying millions, maybe even billions of dollars' worth of Western medicines and consuming them like half-wits?

Why were we losing knowledge known to our forefathers? Recent forefathers, who had lived in our own century!

To say nothing of the Bible, which describes an unusual situation from more than two thousand years ago! What unknown forces were working so assiduously to wipe our forefathers' knowledge from our memory? And not only that, but trying to keep us from sticking our nose where it didn't belong. They were trying to wipe it away—and succeeding!

I was gripped by fury. I also saw that the pharmacy was selling cedar oil—in imported packaging. I bought one thirty-gram vial and had it tested. I don't think it contained more than two drops of oil. The rest was some kind of diluting agent. It didn't compare with what we had manufactured at the consumer cooperation institute. And these two diluted drops cost fifty thousand rubles! What if we sold it ourselves, rather than purchase it abroad? All of Siberia could live well off this oil alone!

We had managed to forget our forefathers' technology, and now, here we were, sniveling that we lived poorly.

All right, I thought, I could still retrieve something. I would set up production of the oil myself and let my own firm get rich.

I decided on another expedition down the Ob, to the north, taking only my headquarters ship, the *Patrice Lu-*



*mumba*. I loaded various goods in the holds and equipped the ship's screening room as a store. I had to hire new people to work. I was not going to ask people from my own firm. My financial affairs had deteriorated while I'd been distracted.

Two weeks after we left Novosibirsk, my security team reported overhearing conversations about the ringing cedar. In their opinion, I had taken on "odd people" among the new hires, to put it mildly. I started calling in individual crew members and talking with them about the upcoming trip into the taiga. Some agreed to go even for free. Others asked for large sums of money for the operation because it had not been part of the agreement when they hired on. It was one thing to be in comfortable conditions on a ship and another to hike twenty-five kilometers into the taiga and carry out a load.

By then my funds were running short. I was not planning to sell the cedar. After all, the old men had said it had to be given away. And I believed the main thing was not the cedar itself but the secret of extracting its oil. And in general I was interested in finding out all kinds of information connected with it.

Gradually, with the help of my security team, I became convinced that I was being followed, especially when I went ashore, but to what end was unclear, as were the

people behind the surveillance. I thought and thought about what to do and decided that in order not to foul things up, I somehow had to outwit everyone in one fell swoop.

## MEETING

Without explaining anything to anyone, I ordered the ship to stop not far from where I had met the old men the previous year. I took a small launch to the settlement myself, and I ordered the ship's captain to continue along our commercial itinerary.

I hoped the locals would help me find the two old Siberians I'd spoken with about the ringing cedar the year before so that I could see the cedar with my own eyes and discuss the least expensive way to deliver it to the ship.

After tying my launch up to a rock on the deserted shore, I was about to head for one of the closest huts when I saw a solitary woman standing on the hillside and started toward her in hopes of getting the information I was interested in from her.

The woman was wearing an old quilted jacket, a long skirt, and tall rubber galoshes like many people of the remote North wear in fall and spring. Her kerchief was tied so as to completely cover both her forehead and neck. It was hard to tell how old the woman was. I greeted her and told her about the two old men I'd met here the previous year.

"That was my grandfather and great-grandfather who spoke to you last year, Vladimir," she replied.

I was amazed. Her voice was young, her diction very precise, and she used the familiar "you" right away and also called me by my name.

I could not remember the old men's names or whether we had even introduced ourselves. I thought, "We must have if she's calling me by my name." Deciding to use the familiar "you" with her as well, I asked, "And what is your name?"

"Anastasia," the woman answered, and she held her hand out to me palm down, as if expecting a kiss.

This gesture from a country woman wearing a quilted jacket and galoshes standing on a deserted shore and trying to behave like a society lady amused me. I shook her hand. Of course I did not kiss it.

Anastasia smiled in embarrassment and suggested I go into the taiga with her, to where her family lived.

"Only you have to walk through the taiga, twenty-five kilometers. That doesn't bother you, Vladimir?"

"It is a little far, of course." I replied to the woman, and to myself I thought, "It's not easy to walk twenty-five kilometers through the taiga, where there aren't any roads. I should take one of my guards, but that would mean chasing down the departed ship, and I have no way of commu-

nicating with it." So as not to waste time, I decided to go alone.

However, I did make my objective known.

"Will you be able to show me the ringing cedar?"

"Yes."

"Do you know everything about it, and will you tell me?"

"I will tell you what I know."

"Then let's go."

En route, I questioned Anastasia about how long she had been living in solitude in the taiga.

Anastasia told me that their family, their clan, had been living in the cedar forest for generations—according to her ancestors, for millennia. Only rarely did they come into direct contact with people from our civilized society. These contacts occurred not where they lived but at those points of settlement they went to in the guise of hunters or people from another settlement.

Anastasia herself had been to two cities, Tomsk and Moscow. For one day apiece. She had not even spent the night. She had wanted to see whether she was mistaken in her notions of city people's way of life. She had saved up money for the trip by selling berries and dried mushrooms. A local woman had lent her her passport.

Anastasia did not approve of her grandfather and great-grandfather's idea of passing out the healing ringing cedar

to lots of people. When asked why, she said these little pieces would fan out among people doing good and ill both. More than likely, most of the pieces would be snatched up by negative individuals. As a result, they could bring more harm than benefit. The main thing, in her opinion, was to help the good. And the people through whom good was achieved. Helping everyone was not the way to alter the imbalance between good and evil; it would remain as before or get worse.

After meeting the old Siberians, I had looked through the popular scientific literature and several historical and scientific works that discussed the cedar's unusual properties. Now I tried to go deeper and understand what Anastasia was saying about the way of life the people of the cedar grove deep in the vast Siberian taiga. I thought, "To what and whom can I compare their way of life?"

I compared them with the Lykov family, whom many people know, I think, from articles in the press. That family, too, lived apart, deep in the taiga, for more than a hundred years.

When geologists chanced upon them and they were written about in the newspapers, I even recalled one headline, "Taiga Impasse," being discussed on television shows.

As I read the articles, I formed an impression of the Lykovs as people who knew a lot about nature but little of

our modern civilized life. Here we had a very different situation. Anastasia impressed me as someone who had an excellent grasp of the problems of our civilized society and of something else that I did not quite understand. She knew our city life and discussed it easily, freely.

We had gone about five kilometers, deeper and deeper into the forest, and I was good and tired because there was no path, let alone a road, and I had to step over fallen trees and around bushes. But the woman walking ahead seemed to experience no weariness whatsoever, and I was embarrassed to reveal my weakness to her with a suggestion to stop and rest.

We came upon a small glade where a stream ran along the edge. The woman said, "You must be tired, Vladimir. If you like, we can rest by this stream."

"I'm not too tired, but it is time for a bite to eat," I replied, and I immediately sat on the grass at the edge of the glade, started taking sandwiches and a flat bottle of good brandy out of my backpack, and offered Anastasia something to drink.

But for some reason she would not drink the brandy or eat with me. "I'm not hungry at all, Vladimir. You eat while I bathe in the nice sun."

After these words, she took three steps away from where I was sitting, removed her jacket, kerchief, and long skirt,

and placed them in the hollow of a tree. She was left wearing a light shift. When she removed the kerchief covering the greater part of her face, I nearly choked on my brandy, so struck was I by what I saw. And when she was left wearing only her light shift . . .

If I believed in miracles I would have ascribed what happened to reincarnation.

Before me stood a young woman with long golden hair and a magnificent figure. Her beauty was out of the ordinary. It was hard to imagine which of the beauties who had won the most prestigious beauty contests could vie with her for looks and, as later became clear, intellect. Everything about this Siberian hermit was attractive and entrancing.

Anastasia lay on the grass, her arms flung wide, palms offered to the sun, eyes closed blissfully. I watched her like a man bewitched, forgetting all about my meal.

Obviously sensing my stare, she turned her head in my direction, looked at me, smiled slightly, and closed her eyes again.

Her face: no makeup, regular features, sleek skin utterly unlike the weathered faces of remote Siberia's inhabitants, large, good, gray-blue eyes, and slightly smiling lips.

She was wearing a light shift, sort of like a nightgown, but I got the impression that her body was not cold, even



though it was only twelve to fifteen degrees above zero Celsius.

The sun was reflected as a golden light in her upturned palms. She was beautiful and half-naked.

I looked at her. My thoughts and feelings became confused. I tried to understand what I should do now and wondered why she'd undressed, why she lay in the grass so tempting and beautiful. Well, why do women of all eras bare their legs, then their breasts, then everything with the help of mini skirts and cleavage? Isn't it to summon the men around her? "Look at how delightful I am, how open and accessible." And what can a man do then? Resist the passion of the flesh, thereby humiliating the woman with his inattention, or show her signs of attention?

In this situation, what signs of attention was I supposed to give?

She and I were alone in the taiga, which meant words were not needed, but rather something else. Should I try to kiss her? Or did she want more? I asked,

"Anastasia, aren't you afraid to walk alone in the taiga?"

She opened her eyes, turned her head toward me, smiled, and replied, "There's nothing for me to fear here, Vladimir."

"I wonder how you would defend yourself if you met up with a few muzhiks, geologists, or hunters."

Instead of answering, she just smiled.

I thought, "How can this young beauty, so extraordinarily tempting, fear nothing and no one?"

To this day, I do not understand what happened after that.

I moved toward Anastasia, who was lying on the grass, embraced her shoulders, and drew her toward me. She did not really resist, although I felt considerable strength in her resilient body. The fragrance of her hair and breath made my head spin a little, and I tried ...

But I couldn't. The last thing I remember before losing consciousness were her eyes and the words she spoke: "Never mind, Vladimir, calm yourself."

Also before this I remember being seized by an incredibly powerful and sudden fear—a fear of I don't know what—as in childhood, when you're home all alone and afraid of something.

When I came to she was kneeling in front of me. One of her hands lay on my chest and the other was waving to someone above and to either side. She was smiling—not at me but at someone who seemed to surround us invisibly or be above us.

With this gesture, Anastasia seemed to be signaling to her invisible friend that nothing bad was happening to her. Then she looked into my eyes calmly and tenderly and

spoke.

"Calm yourself, Vladimir, it's all over now."

"But what was it?" I asked.

"Harmony's failure to understand your attitude toward me, the desire that arose in you. Later you'll be able to sort all this out yourself."

"What does any kind of harmony have to do with this? It's you! You yourself started to resist."

"I failed to understand it, too. I didn't like it."

I sat down and pulled my bag toward me.

"That's just great! She didn't understand it! She didn't like it! All you women do is try to seduce us. Bare your legs, display your breasts, wear high heels. It's uncomfortable walking on heels, but you do! You do and you wiggle all your charms. But the least little thing and you, 'Oh, I don't need that, I'm not like that.' Then why do you wiggle? Hypocrites! I'm an entrepreneur, and I've seen all kinds of women. You all want the same thing, you just put on different airs. So why did you take off your outer clothing? It isn't hot! Then you go and stretch out there, you stop talking, and you smile as if..."

"I'm uncomfortable in clothing, Vladimir. I put it on when I leave the forest and join people, to look like everyone else. I lay down in the sun to rest and not bother you while you ate."

"You didn't want to bother me. Well, you did."

"Forgive me, please, Vladimir. Of course you're right that every woman wants men to notice her, but not just her legs and breasts. She wants that one man who sees more not to walk by."

"But no one here was walking by! Just what is this more that needs seeing, if her legs are sticking out in front? You women are so illogical."

"Yes, unfortunately, life is like that sometimes. Shall we go farther, Vladimir? Are you finished eating? Are you rested?"

The idea flashed through my mind that maybe there was no point going any farther with this philosophical savage. Not only that, but she obviously possessed special abilities, since I'd lost consciousness at the mere touch of her. What should I do? Go back maybe? No, I couldn't find my way back to the river alone. I had to go forward.

"All right, let's go," I told Anastasia.

## MAN OR BEAST?

We continued on our way to Anastasia's home. She left her clothing in the tree's hollow. She put her galoshes there, too. She was left in her light shift.

She took my backpack, offering to help carry it.

Barefoot, the taiga beauty walked ahead of me with an unusually light and graceful gait, lightly swinging the backpack, which she held with one hand.

We talked the whole time. Talking with her on any subject was very interesting, maybe because she had rather strange opinions about everything.

Sometimes Anastasia would spin around as she walked. Turning to face me, she would talk and laugh and walk like that for a while, "ass forward," carried away by the conversation and not watching where she was going. I couldn't understand why she didn't stumble even once or stab her bare foot on a dry bare twig. There was no visible path on our way, but there were none of the usual taiga obstacles either.

As we went, she would sometimes touch or quickly stroke a leaf or the branch of a bush. Leaning over, without looking, she would tear off an herb and ... eat it.

"Just like a beast," I thought.

When we came across berries, Anastasia would hold them out to me and I would eat them as we walked, too.

Her body was not marked by any special musculature. Basically, Anastasia had an average build. Neither skinny nor fat—a well-nourished, resilient, and very beautiful body. But the strength in it, in my opinion, was considerable, and her reflexes were not bad at all.

When I tripped and started to fall, my hands stretched out in front, Anastasia turned lightning fast, quickly put out her own hand, the one without the backpack, and my chest fell against her palm and spread fingers. I fell without touching the ground.

She held my body up with one hand and righted it. At the same time she kept talking about something, not tensing in the least.

After I straightened up with the help of her hand, we continued on our way as if nothing had happened, and I thought for some reason about the gas gun in my backpack.

The taiga hermit may have been a beauty, but she had lured me into a situation where I had no protection of any kind from possible nasty accidents.

Imperceptibly, while we had been talking, we had gone a good ways. Suddenly Anastasia halted, put my backpack

under a tree, and joyously informed me, "Here we are! Home!"

I looked around. A small, neat glade, flowers amid magisterial cedars, but no structures whatsoever. I didn't even see a hut. Nothing at all! Not so much as a primitive temporary shelter! But she was rejoicing as if we had come upon a comfortable dwelling.

"But where's the house? Where do we sleep, eat, and take cover from the rain?" I asked, barely restraining the alarm in my voice.

"This is my house, Vladimir. I have everything here."

A vague sense of alarm began to take hold of me.

"Where is this everything? Give me a kettle at least to boil water and an ax."

"I don't have a kettle or an ax, Vladimir, and it would be better not to make a fire."

"What are you saying? She doesn't even have a kettle! You were the one who invited me to your home, and among normal people, the word 'home' assumes a building with a roof over our head where there's a kitchen, at least one bedroom, and a pantry of food. My bottle of water is empty. You saw that when I was eating. I even threw away the bottle. Now all I have left is a couple of swallows of brandy. It's a day's walk to a river or village, and I'm very tired and thirsty. Where do you get your water? What do

you drink from?"

Seeing my agitation, Anastasia became upset and quickly took my hand and pulled me across the glade into the forest, repeating as we went, "Just don't worry, Vladimir! Please. Don't get upset. I'll take care of everything. You'll rest. Get a good night's sleep. I'll do everything. You won't be cold. You're thirsty? I'll give you something to drink right now."

All of ten or fifteen meters from the glade, behind some bushes, there turned out to be a small taiga lake before us. Anastasia quickly scooped up a handful of water and brought it to my face.

"Here is the water. Drink some, please."

"What's wrong with you, Anastasia? Are you a total savage? How can you drink raw water from a forest puddle? You saw I was drinking Borzhomi. On the ship we even put river water for washing through a special filter, add chlorine, and aerate it."

"This isn't a puddle, Vladimir. Here we have clean, living water. It's good! Not half dead, like you have. You can drink this water. It's like mother's milk. Look."

Anastasia brought her hands up to her own face and drank the water from them.

I blurted out, "Anastasia, are you a beast?"

"Why a beast? Because my bed isn't like yours? I don't



have a car? Or all kinds of devices?"

"Because you live like a beast, in the forest, have nothing, and apparently like it that way."

"Yes, I do like living here."

"There, you see? You confirmed it yourself."

"Vladimir, do you think the characteristic difference between man and everything living on Earth is that he has artificially created objects?"

"Yes! Or, to put it more precisely—civilized daily life."

"You consider your daily life more civilized? Yes, of course, you do. But I am not a beast, Vladimir. I am a human being!"

## WHO ARE THEY?

Subsequently, in the three days I spent with Anastasia—observing this strange young woman living alone in the remote Siberian taiga—I tried to understand the point of her way of life and could not help but compare it with the way of life of people living in the large metropolises.

Anastasia lives in the forest completely alone. She has no dwelling, she barely wears clothing, and she does not put up stores of food. She is the descendent of people who have lived here for millennia and were the representatives of an essentially different civilization. She and her kind have been preserved to our day, in my opinion, with the help of a very wise decision, perhaps the only correct decision. They blend in among us, outwardly trying not to stand out in any way from ordinary people, and where they have their permanent residence, they blend with nature.

Finding the places where they live is hard. Man's presence in such a place can be determined only by the fact that it seems better tended, handsomer, like Anastasia's taiga glade, for example.

Anastasia was born here and is an inalienable part of

nature. Unlike the great hermits we know, she did not retreat to the forest just for a while, as they did. She was born in the taiga and only visits our world briefly. A perfectly simple explanation was found for the seemingly mystic phenomenon, when that powerful fear suddenly flooded me and I lost consciousness in my attempt to overpower Anastasia. Man has tamed the cat, dog, elephant, tiger, and eagle, and here everything around has been tamed. And this everything cannot allow anything bad to happen to her.

Anastasia told me that when she was born and before she was even a year old, her mother might leave her alone for a whole day.

"And you didn't starve to death?" I asked.

The taiga hermit first looked at me in amazement and then replied, "Vladimir, the world was created from the beginning in such a way that man would have no need to waste the energy of his thoughts on where to get food or what kind. Everything around matures in the sequence man requires. You have to eat as you breathe, paying no attention to your nourishment and undistracted from the most important thing. The Creator laid this problem on others so that man could live and carry out his purpose."

"Do you mean to say that the hundreds of millions of people of the civilized world do not need to be going to

work every day to eat properly?"

"The way of life they've chosen forces them to go to work."

"What does their way of life have to do with this? The way of life of peasants and farmers is different from a city dweller's, but they too work from morning 'til night to feed their family."

"And for you to get just one cedar nut, for example, you must have to exert quite a lot of effort. Over there the cedar cones on the tree are high above ground, a good ten meters up."

"Yes, it is high," Anastasia agreed. "I hadn't thought of that before. I'd always done it the way my grandfather taught me."

At these words, Anastasia raised her right hand and snapped her fingers. A few minutes later there was a fluffy red squirrel next to Anastasia, who was sitting on the grass.

The little beast was standing on its hind legs holding a cedar cone in its paws. Anastasia snapped her fingers a second time, paying no attention to the squirrel and continuing the conversation.

The little beast began quickly husking the cone, taking the cedar nuts out of it, and putting them in a pile. When Anastasia clicked her fingers a third time, the squirrel

shelled one nut and jumped smartly onto her palm.

Anastasia raised the little beast's face to her mouth.

The squirrel passed the kernel of the cedar nut from his mouth to hers, jumped off her hand, and started shelling the next nut.

Standing on the ground holding cones in their front paws were more than a dozen other squirrels, and their numbers quickly multiplied. Anastasia slapped the grass a meter away from where I was sitting. All the squirrels started husking the cones and piling the nuts at the indicated spot. Once done with a cone, each squirrel went off for another. A few minutes later a pile of cedar nuts was towering in front of me.

At first this scene seemed fantastic, but then I recalled how at Novosibirsk's Akademgorodok, whose housing was built in the middle of a pine forest, there were lots of squirrels, which got used to people. The squirrels begged for food from the strolling residents and actually got angry when they weren't given anything. Here I was simply observing the reverse process.

I told Anastasia, "In the normal world, our world, everything is arranged differently. Just try to click your fingers at a commercial stall, Anastasia. You could beat a drum and they wouldn't give you anything. But you say, 'The Creator solved everything.'"

"Whose fault is it if man decided to change the Creator's work? For better or worse, try to understand for yourself, Vladimir."

This was my dialog with her on the problem of nourishment. Anastasia's position is simple. It's sinful to waste thought on what was initially offered in abundance. The way of life in man's artificial world creates problems. It turned out that the hermit Anastasia, residing in the taiga, gave no thought to her nourishment and wasted neither physical nor intellectual energy on it. At the same time, she had top-quality, organic nourishment that was ideally balanced for her organism. So we in the civilized world, it turned out, not only had to think about nourishment but also work for it from morning to night, meanwhile getting food of highly dubious quality.

We were used to our world and called it civilized. But hadn't men's modern civilization forgotten about the existence of another life, in harmony with nature? What heights could man have reached had he devoted the millennia of his development to the natural rather than the artificial world?

We know many examples from literature, the press, and television programs of infants who have fallen accidentally into the power of wild nature being suckled by wolves. Here, generations of people had lived continuously in har-

mony with their environment, and their relationship with the animal world was different from ours. Furthermore, their organism may have had different properties.

I asked Anastasia, "Why aren't you cold, while I'm wearing a jacket?"

"Because the organism of people who wrap up in clothing," she said, "who hide from the cold and heat in shelters, steadily loses its ability to adapt to changes in its environment. I haven't lost this property of the human organism, so I don't particularly need clothing."

## A FOREST BEDROOM

I had no gear with me for sleeping in the wild forest. Anastasia put me to bed in a dugout lair. Exhausted after our difficult journey, I fell asleep hard and fast. When I awoke, I had a sensation of bliss and comfort, as if I'd been lying on a magnificent, comfortable bed.

The lair, or dugout, was spacious and lined with tiny fluffy cedar twigs and dried grass, which filled the space with a pleasant fragrance.

Stretching, I flung my arms out to either side. One hand touched a furry hide, and I immediately made a note that Anastasia hunted in some fashion. I moved closer to the fur, pressing my back to its warmth, and decided to doze a little longer.

Anastasia was standing at the entrance to my taiga bedroom, and when she saw I'd awakened she immediately said, "May today's day come to you with good, Vladimir. And may you meet it with your own good. Only don't be frightened, please."

She clapped her hands, and the "fur" . . . I realized in horror that this was no hide. A bear began to crawl out of the den cautiously. Receiving an approving slap from



Anastasia, the bear licked her hand and began hobbling away from the glade. It turned out that Anastasia had put sleeping herbs at the head of my bed and made the bear lie next to me so I wouldn't be cold. She herself had slept curled up outside, at the entrance.

"How could you have done such a thing, Anastasia? He might have ripped me to shreds or crushed me."

"It's not a he, it's a she—a female bear. It is very docile and could not have done anything bad to you," Anastasia replied. "It gets great pleasure from being given a task and carrying it out. It didn't budge the whole night. It poked its nose into my feet and fell blissfully still. It just shuddered a little when you flung your arms around in your sleep and hit it on the back."

## ANASTASIA'S MORNING

When twilight falls, Anastasia goes to bed in one of the shelters made by the inhabitants of the forest, usually a lair. When it's warm, she might sleep right on the grass. The first thing she does when she awakens is rejoice wildly at the rising sun, the new shoots appearing on the branches, and the new sprouts emerging from the earth. She touches them, strokes them, sometimes sets something aright. Then she runs over to the small trees and slaps their trunk. Something like dust or dew showers down on her from the shaking crown. Then she lies down on the grass and for five minutes or so blissfully stretches and bends. Her entire body becomes covered with what seems like a moist cream.

She takes off at a run, jumps into the small lake, splashes, and dives in—dives wonderfully!

Her relations with the animal world around her resemble man's relations with domestic animals.

During her morning routine, many of them observe Anastasia. They don't approach, but all she has to do is look in their direction and make a barely noticeable summoning gesture, and the happy animal is off and running

toward her feet.

One morning I saw her acting the fool, playing with a wolf cub as if it were a pet dog.

Anastasia slapped the cub on its shoulder and swiftly ran off. The cub ran to catch up, and when they were nearly even, Anastasia suddenly took a leap as she ran, jumped and pushed off a tree trunk with two feet, and took off in another direction.

The cub kept running past the tree, out of inertia, turned, and raced to catch up with the laughing Anastasia.

Anastasia doesn't give a moment's thought to the problem of clothing and nourishment. Most often she walks around half- or entirely naked. She eats cedar nuts, some herbs, berries, and mushrooms. She eats only dried mushrooms. She herself never gathers mushrooms or nuts and provisions and puts up no stores, even for winter. Everything is prepared by the many squirrels that inhabit these parts. There is nothing surprising in the fact that the squirrels put up stores of food for winter. They do this everywhere, following their natural instinct. What struck me was something else. At the snap of Anastasia's fingers, the squirrels close to her raced to jump into her outstretched hand and give her a shelled nut. And when Anastasia slapped her bent knee, or the earth, the squirrels made a sound, as if summoning, informing the others,

and started dragging out dried mushrooms and other stores and piling them in front of her on the grass. And they did it with tremendous satisfaction, or so it seemed to me. I thought she had trained them, but Anastasia said their actions seemed instinctive, and the mother squirrel herself taught her little squirrels by example.

"Maybe one of my distant ancestors did train them, but more than likely this is just their predestination. For winter, each squirrel puts away stores that are several times more than it can eat itself."

When asked how she didn't freeze in winter without appropriate clothing, Anastasia answered with a question: "In your world, don't you have examples of man's abilities to withstand cold without using clothing?"

Then I remembered the book by Porfiry Ivanov, who went around in any cold wearing underpants and barefoot. The book also described how the fascists, wishing to test the endurance of this unusual Russian man, doused him with water when it was twenty below zero and drove him around naked on a motorcycle.

In her early childhood, besides her mother's milk, Anastasia could use the milk of various animals. They freely lowered their teats to her. She made absolutely no cult whatsoever of food, never sat down especially to eat, picked berries and plant shoots as she went, and contin-

ued to go about her business.

By the end of three days with her, I could no longer treat her as I had when we first met. After all I had seen and heard, Anastasia had become for me a creature—not a beast, because her intellect is quite high, but her memory—her memory is such that she, of course, forgets nothing she has ever heard or seen. Sometimes her abilities seemed to lie beyond ordinary comprehension, but this attitude toward her caused her much grief and distress.

Unlike people we know with unusual abilities who wrap themselves in an aura of mystery and exceptionality, she was constantly trying to explain and reveal the mechanism of her abilities, to prove that there was nothing supernatural about them or her, that she was a person, a woman, and she was constantly asking me to be conscious of that. I tried to do so as I sought an explanation for what was so unusual. I tried to consider it rationally.

The mind of someone from our civilization tries by every means possible to arrange his daily life, obtain nourishment, and satisfy his sexual instincts. Anastasia spent no time on this at all. People who end up in a situation like the Lykovs are also forced to worry constantly about feeding themselves and arranging shelter. Nature does not help them to the degree it does Anastasia.

Nor do all the various tribes living far from civilization

have this contact. Anastasia explained this by saying that their intentions were not sufficiently pure. Nature and the animal world sensed this.

## ANASTASIA'S RAY

What seemed most unusual and mystical to me when I was in the forest was her ability to see individual people and their situations at a great distance. Perhaps other hermits possess this ability as well.

She did this with the help of an invisible ray. She said every person had one, but people didn't know about it and so couldn't use it.

"Man has yet to invent anything nature doesn't have. The equipment that makes television possible is just a pathetic likeness of this ray's scope."

Since the ray was invisible, I didn't believe in it, even though she tried several times to demonstrate and explain the principle of its functioning and find proofs and understandable explanations. Then one day . . .

"Tell me, Vladimir, what do you think waking dreams are? And are many people capable of them?"

"I think many do have waking dreams. A waking dream is when a person imagines a desired future."

"Good. That means you don't deny that man possesses the ability to model his own future and different specific situations, right?"

"Right."

"And what is intuition?"

"Intuition . . . intuition is probably the feeling when someone seems not to be analyzing what might happen or why but certain feelings suggest to him how he needs to act."

"That means you don't deny the existence in each person of something apart from the usual analytical reasoning that helps him determine his own and others' actions, right?"

"I guess I don't."

"Excellent! Good!" Anastasia exclaimed. "Now sleeping dreams! A dream—what is it? The dreams that almost all people have when they sleep."

"A dream is . . . I don't know what it is. A dream is just a dream."

"Good, good. Let it just be a dream. That means you don't deny its existence, right? You and others know that when a person is in a dream state, when his body is almost not under the control of part of his consciousness, he can see people and different events."

"Well, I don't think anyone would deny that."

"But in dreams people can also communicate, have conversations, and empathize."

"Yes, they can."



"And what do you think, can a person direct his own dream? Call up the images and events in his dream that he wishes to see? Like on an ordinary television, for instance."

"I don't think that would work for anyone. A dream happens all by itself somehow."

"You're wrong. Man can control everything. He was created to control everything."

"The ray I've been telling you about consists of the information, notions, intuitions, and emotional sensations man has inside and, as a consequence, the visions, not unlike dreams, that are consciously controlled by man's will."

"How can you control a dream in your sleep?"

"Not in your sleep. You can when you're awake. Program it in advance, in a way, and with absolute precision. For you, this happens chaotically in your dream. Man has lost the greater part of his abilities to control natural phenomena and himself. That is why he decided that dreaming was just a superfluous product of his weary brain. In fact, almost all people on earth . . . Well, would you like me to try to help you right now to see something at a distance?"

"Try away."

"Lie down on the grass and relax so that your body uses the least possible energy. You have to be comfortable."

Nothing is bothering you? Now think about the person you know best of all, your wife, for example. Recall her habits, walk, and clothing, and where you think she might be right now, and picture all this with your imagination."

I thought of my wife, knowing that at that moment she might be at our country home. I pictured the house, a few things, the surroundings. I recalled a lot and in detail, but I didn't see anything. I told Anastasia this, to which she replied, "You don't know how to relax completely, as if you were just about to fall asleep. I'll help you. Close your eyes. Spread your arms out to either side."

Then I felt her fingers touch mine and began to plunge into sleep, or slumber. . . .

. . . My wife was standing in the kitchen of our country home. She had put a knit top over her usual robe. That meant the house was chilly. More problems with the heating system.

My wife was brewing coffee on the gas burner. And something else in the "dog's pot." My wife's face was sullen and displeased. Her movements were sluggish. All of a sudden she looked up, walked lightly to the window, looked at the rain, and smiled. The coffee boiled over on the burner and she grabbed the pot with the overflowing coffee, but at the same time she did not frown or get irritated, as usual. She took off her top. . . .

I woke up.

"Well? Did you see something?" Anastasia asked.

"Yes. But couldn't that have been an ordinary dream?"

"What do you mean ordinary? You had planned to see her!"

"Yes, I had. And I did. But where's the proof that she was there in the kitchen at the moment I saw her in my dream?"

"Remember this day and hour if you want to verify it, Vladimir. When you get home, ask her. Did you notice anything else unusual?"

"Nothing."

"Didn't you see the smile on your wife's face when she walked over to the window? She smiled and didn't get irritated over the spilled coffee."

"I did notice that. She must have seen something good out the window that cheered her up."

"All she saw out the window was rain. Rain, which she never liked."

"So why did she smile?"

"I looked at your wife with my ray, too, and warmed her."

"You mean your ray warmed her and mine, what, is cold?"

"You just looked out of interest. You didn't invest your

feelings."

"You mean your ray can warm someone at a distance?"

"Yes."

"What else?"

"Receive and transmit certain information. The ray can improve someone's mood and partially drive out a person's pains. And lots of other different things depending on the energy I have and the strength of my feelings, will, and desire."

"And can you see the future?"

"Naturally!"

"The past?"

"The future and past are practically the same thing. The difference is just in the outward details. The main thing remains unchanged always."

"How is that? What can be unchanged?"

"For instance, a thousand years ago people wore different clothing. They used other devices in their daily life. But that isn't the main thing. A thousand years ago, like now, people had identical emotions. Those are not subject to time.

"Fear, joy, love. Imagine, Yaroslav the Wise, Ivan the Terrible, or a pharaoh could love a woman with exactly the same emotions as you or someone else does today."

"Interesting. Only I don't understand what this means.

You say every person could have a ray like that?"

"Naturally. Even now people still have emotions and intuition, the ability to dream awake, to conjecture, to model individual situations, to dream asleep, only it's all chaotic and uncontrolled."

"Maybe we need to train somehow? Develop exercises?"

"You can if you train. Only, you know, Vladimir, there is one more indispensable condition for the ray to be subject to your will."

"What condition is that?"

"Purity of intentions is indispensable, and the ray's power depends on the power of the emotions of light."

"There you go! It's all coming clear, I think. But what does purity of intentions have to do with it? And emotions of light?"

"They are the ray's energy."

"That's it, Anastasia. This has ceased to be interesting. After this you'll add on something else."

"I've already told you the main part."

"Oh yes, you have, but there are too many conditions. Let's talk about something else. Something a little simpler."

\* \* \*

Anastasia fills her day contemplating and modeling all kinds of situations going on in our past, present, and future life.

Anastasia has a prodigious memory. She remembers the many people she has seen in her imaginings or with her ray, as well as their inner struggles. Like a brilliant actress, she can imitate their walk and voice and think the way they do. She distills in herself the life experience of many people from the past and present. She uses this experience to model the future and help others. She does this at a great distance, with the help of her invisible ray, and those to whom she renders aid in the form of suggestions and decisions or whom she heals never suspect.

Only later did I learn that these rays, invisible to ordinary sight, come from each person, only with varying strengths. Academician Akimov photographed them using special devices and published the photographs of these rays in 1996, in the May issue of *Miracles and Adventures*. Unfortunately, we cannot use them as she can. Science calls something like this ray a "torsion field."

\* \* \*

Anastasia's worldview is unusual and interesting.

"What is God, Anastasia? Is there a God? If so, why can no one see Him?"

"God is interplanetary Reason, Intellect. He is not a unified mass. Half of Him is in the extramaterial world of the Universe. This is the set of all energies. The second half of Him is diffused as small particles on Earth, in each person. The forces of darkness try to block these particles."

"What do you think is in store for our society?"

"In the future, an awareness of the true perniciousness of the technocratic path of development and a movement back to the primary sources."

"Do you mean to say that all our scientists are underdeveloped beings who are leading us into an impasse?"

"I mean to say that through them the process is accelerating, and that means so is our awareness of the wrong path."

"Which means what? Are we building all our cars and houses for nothing?"

"Yes."

"Don't you get bored living here alone, Anastasia?"

Alone, without a television or telephone?"

"What primitive things you've named. Man had all of that from the very beginning, only in a more perfect form. I have it, too."

"A television and a telephone?"

"What is a television? A device that offers information and pictures and draws up stories for the almost atrophied human imagination. With my imagination I can draw any subject, any picture, and construct the most incredible situations, and not only that but take part in them myself and have an effect on the story. Oh, I must not have expressed myself clearly. Right?"

"And the telephone?"

"A man can speak to another man without a telephone. All it takes is the will, the desire of both, and a developed imagination."



## CONCERT IN THE TAIGA

I suggested she come to Moscow and appear on television.

"Imagine, Anastasia. With your beauty you could be a photo model, or a world-class runway model."

This was when I realized that earthly things were not alien to her and, like any woman, she liked being a beauty. Anastasia started to laugh.

"The most beautiful of all, right?" she repeated and, like a child, she started playing the fool and prancing across the glade like a model down a runway.

She was funny imitating a model, putting one foot in front of the other as she walked and displaying her imaginary garments.

I started applauding, and joining in on the game I announced, "And now, ladies and gentlemen, attention! Appearing before you is the gorgeous, unsurpassed gymnast and incomparable beauty, Anastasia!"

This announcement amused her even more. She ran to the middle of the glade and performed incredible somersaults, first forward, then backward, sideways, to the right, to the left, and then leaped very high. She grabbed a

branch with one hand, swung a couple of times, and flung her body to another tree. After turning another somersault, she bowed coquettishly to my applause. Then she ran from the glade and hid behind the thick bushes. Smiling, Anastasia peeked out as if from the wings and impatiently awaited my next announcement. I remembered a video of some favorite songs done by popular singers. Sometimes at night in my cabin I would watch it.

After recalling this video, without even thinking about whether Anastasia would be able to portray anything, I announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, we now present the best soloists of the modern stage, who will perform their best compositions. If you would!"

Oh, how wrong I was not to trust in her abilities. What happened then was absolutely beyond belief. Having barely taken a step from her improvised wings, Anastasia began singing in the voice of Alla Pugacheva. No, she wasn't parodying the great singer or imitating her voice, she was singing, freely transmitting, not only her voice and melody but also her emotions.

However, there was something even more amazing. Anastasia accented individual words, adding something of her own. She added nuances to the song. And Alla Pugacheva's song, whose interpretation I thought could not be surpassed, evoked an entire spectrum of additional

emotions and highlighted the images even more vividly, as in, for example, the following song, magnificently performed in all:

*Once there was an artist,  
Who had a little house and his paints,  
But he loved an actress,  
And this actress loved flowers.  
He sold his house then,  
He sold his paintings and paints  
And with all his money bought  
An ocean of flowers ...*

Anastasia put the stress on the word "paints."

She shouted the word in surprise and fear. Paints are what is most precious for an artist. Without them he cannot create. He has given up what is dearest to him for the sake of his beloved. Later, at the lyric, "far away the train bore her," she depicted the artist, the lover, watching the train pulling out, carrying his beloved away forever. She portrayed pain, despair, and anguish.

Shaken by all I had seen and heard, I did not applaud when the song ended. Anastasia bowed, waited for my applause, and when she did not hear it began a new song with even greater ardor. She performed all my favorite

songs recorded on my cassette in order. And in her performance each song, which I had heard many times, was even more vivid and moving. After she had performed the last song, when she heard no applause, Anastasia went into her "wings." Shaken, I sat a little longer in silence, under this unusual impression.

Then I leapt up and began to clap and shout, "Well done, Anastasia! Bis! Bravo! All performers on stage!"

Anastasia came out cautiously and bowed. I kept shouting,

"Bis! Bravo!" I stamped my feet and clapped my hands.

She became very cheerful as well. She clapped and shouted, "Bis. Does that mean more?"

"Yes, more! More! And even more! You did so well, Anastasia! Better than they themselves! Even better than our stars!"

I fell silent and studied Anastasia closely. It occurred to me how multifaceted her soul was, if she could impart so much that was new, beautiful, and vivid to a seemingly ideal performance of songs.

She had fallen still as well and was watching me silently and questioningly.

Then I asked her, "Anastasia, do you have your own song? Could you perform something of your own that I've never heard before?"

"Yes, but my song doesn't have words. Will you like it?"

"Sing your song, please."

"All right."

And she began to sing her extraordinary song.

First Anastasia cried out like a newborn child. Then her voice became soft, gentle and kind.

She stood under a tree, her hands pressed to her breast, head bowed, as if she were singing a lullaby and caressing the baby with her voice. Her voice was saying something gentle to him. And this quiet but amazingly pure voice made everything all around—the birds singing and the insects chirring in the grass—suddenly fall silent.

Then Anastasia seemed to be rejoicing at a child just awakened. There was exultation in her voice. Incredibly high notes first hovered above the earth and then soared into infinity.

Anastasia's voice implored someone, then entered into battle, then once again caressed the child and gave joy to everything around her.

Joy settled in me as well.

When she had finished her song, I shouted merrily, "And now, my esteemed ladies, gentlemen, and friends, a unique, unrepeatable act by the first and foremost trainer in the world! Deft, bold, and fascinating and capable of taming any predator. Watch and thrill!"

Anastasia actually squealed with delight, jumped up, clapped rhythmically, shouted something, and gave a whistle. Something unimaginable began in the glade.

The wolf cub appeared first. It jumped out of the bushes, stopped at the edge of the glade, and looked around, perplexed. Squirrels were racing through the trees that surrounded the glade, jumping from branch to branch. Two eagles circled low and little creatures rustled in the bushes.

There was a crack of dry branches—and a huge bear ran into the glade, after moving aside and trampling the bushes, stopping dead in its tracks close to Anastasia. The wolf cub growled at it in disapproval. Evidently the bear had come too close to Anastasia without an invitation.

Anastasia ran up to the bear, playfully slapped its snout, grabbed its front paws, and brought it to a standing position. She seemed to have exerted no significant physical effort in doing so, and the bear itself carried out her instructions, as best it understood them. It stood there frozen, trying to understand what she wanted of it.

Anastasia took a running start, leapt high, grabbed the bear's thick mane, did a handstand, and jumped down again, turning a somersault in the air. Then she took the bear by the paw and started leaning over, pulling the bear along and creating the impression of throwing him over

her shoulder. This trick would have been impossible if the bear hadn't done it itself and Anastasia hadn't merely directed him. The bear started to fall on Anastasia but at the last moment put its weight on its palm on the ground and probably did everything possible not to inflict harm on its mistress or friend.

The wolf cub was getting more and more upset. It could no longer stand still and started rushing from side to side, either growling or snarling. A few more wolves appeared at the edge of the glade, and when Anastasia "threw" the bear over her shoulder one more time, trying to do it so that it also turned over her head, the bear fell on its side and stopped moving.

The utterly distraught wolf cub, baring its teeth maliciously, took a leap in the bear's direction.

In a flash Anastasia was in the wolf cub's path, and the cub, braking on all four paws, tumbled over and struck Anastasia's leg. Immediately she put one hand on the shoulder of the cub, which obediently flattened itself to the ground. With her second hand Anastasia waved, as she had with me when I first had wanted to embrace her without her consent.

The forest around us was making aroused, though not threatening noises. You could feel its arousal in the jumping, running, and hiding beasts, big and small. Anastasia

began to instill calm. First she petted the wolf cub, slapped it on the shoulder, and sent it off with a spank, like a dog. The bear lay on its side in an awkward pose, like a scarecrow. It was probably waiting for something else to be asked of it. Anastasia went up to it, made it rise, stroked its snout, and, like the wolf cub, sent it packing.

Flushed and cheerful, Anastasia ran up and sat next to me, took a deep breath, and slowly exhaled. I noticed that her breathing immediately became even, as if she had not just performed her incredible exercises.

"They don't understand acting, and they don't need to. It's not entirely a good thing," Anastasia commented, and she asked me, "Well, how was I? Could I ever get a job in your life?"

"You were great, Anastasia, but we already have all that. Trainers in circuses show lots of interesting things with beasts. You would never break in, past the barrier of officials and all the conventions and intrigues. You're not well versed in them."

After this our game consisted of sifting through her options: where Anastasia might get a job in our world and how she might overcome the existing conventions. But no easy options were found, since Anastasia had no documents about her education, or residence permit, and no one would believe the stories about her background just



on the basis of her abilities, however unusual.

Shifting to a serious note, Anastasia said, "Naturally I would like to spend time again in one of the cities, Moscow maybe, to see how accurate I've been in modeling certain situations from your life. For instance, I don't quite understand how the forces of darkness have managed to fool women to such a degree that, without even suspecting it themselves, they attract men with the charms of their body and so cannot make a true choice, a soul mate. Afterward they're the ones who suffer. They can't create a true family because ..."

She launched back into a stunning and demanding discourse on sex, the family, and childrearing, and I thought, "What is most unlikely out of everything I've seen and heard is her ability to speak about our life and know it so accurately and in such detail."

## WHO WILL LIGHT A NEW STAR

The second night, afraid that Anastasia would slip her bear in to keep me warm or cook up something else, I categorically refused to go to bed at all if she herself did not lie down next to me. I thought, "If she's next to me, she won't be up to anything." And I said, "This is what you call inviting me to be your guest. To your home. I thought there'd be some kind of structure here, but you won't even let me build a fire and you slip wild animals in with me at night. If you don't have a normal house, then you shouldn't be inviting guests."

"All right, Vladimir, don't get upset, please, and don't be afraid. Nothing bad is going to happen to you. If you like, I'll lie next to you and keep you warm."

This time there were even more cedar branches and dried, neatly laid grass thrown in the dugout lair, and the walls were stuck with twigs as well.

I got undressed, put my pants and sweater under my head, lay down, and covered up with my jacket. The cedar branches gave off that very same volatile fragrance which the popular scientific literature says decontaminates the air, although in the taiga the air is quite pure and easy to

breathe as is. The dry grass and flowers added another extraordinarily subtle fragrance.

Anastasia kept her word and lay down next to me. The fragrance of her body surpassed all the others. It was more pleasant than the most refined perfumes whose fragrance I had ever smelled on any woman. Her body also gave off an unusually pleasant warmth that seemed to wrap around her body like a halo, and when I moved closer to her it wrapped around my body as well. It was as if Anastasia and I were inside an invisible but tangible sphere or cocoon. I may have been wrapped in an invisible aura. It was cozy and peaceful next to Anastasia. But now I had no thought of taking her, as I had the first day we met. I recalled how at our halt, during my attempt to kiss Anastasia, I had suddenly been flooded with fear and had lost consciousness. Since that incident I had had no carnal desires, even when I'd seen her naked.

I lay there dreaming about the son my wife had not borne me. I thought, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if I had a son by Anastasia! She's so healthy, hardy, and beautiful. That means the child would be healthy, too. And look like me. And maybe like her, too, but I'd rather more like me. He would be a strong and intelligent individual. He would know a lot. He would be talented and happy."

I pictured my baby son clinging to her nipples and un-

consciously laid my hand on Anastasia's firm and warm breast.

Immediately a shudder ran right through my body—not a shudder of fear, but another kind, unusually pleasant. I did not pull my hand away but merely held my breath and waited for what would happen next. And then I felt her soft palm lying on my hand. She had not pushed me away.

I raised up and began looking at Anastasia's beautiful face. The white northern night made her even more attractive. I could not tear my eyes away.

Her gray-blue eyes were watching me tenderly.

I couldn't help myself. I leaned over and lightly touched and then cautiously kissed her parted lips.

Another pleasant shudder ran through my body. My face was enveloped by the fragrance of her breathing.

Her lips did not utter, as they had the last time, "Never mind, Vladimir, calm yourself," and there was no fear at all. Thoughts of a son would not leave me. When Anastasia gently embraced me, stroked my hair, and yielded her entire body to me, I felt something incredible! . . .

Only after I awoke in the morning was I conscious of a magnificent sensation, a blissful delight and satisfaction such as I had never once experienced in my life.

What was also strange was that usually after spending a night with a woman I've felt a physical weariness. Here it

was entirely different, and I had the sense of some great creation.

The satisfaction was not only physical but also somehow incomprehensible, previously unheard of, unusually beautiful and joyous. The thought even occurred to me that only this feeling made life worth living. Why had I never experienced anything even closely resembling this, even though I had been with all kinds of women—beautiful, beloved, and experienced in love?

Anastasia was a young woman, a timid and tender young woman, but at the same time she had something inside her unlike any of the women I had known. What? Where was she now? I moved toward the access to our cozy lair, poked my nose out, and looked at the glade.

The glade was slightly lower than my night's abode. It was covered with a half-meter layer of morning fog.

In this fog, her arms flung wide, Anastasia was spinning.

She raised a small cloud of fog around herself, and when it had wrapped her up entirely, Anastasia took a light leap, extending her legs in a split like a ballerina, flew above the layer of fog, dropped to a new spot, and once again, laughing, spun a new cloud around herself through which the rays of the rising Sun shone, caressing her. This scene enchanted and enraptured me, and from an excess of emo-

tion I shouted, "Ana-sta-si-a! Good morning, beautiful forest fairy Anastas-i-a!"

"Good morning, Vladimir," she shouted gaily in reply. "It's so fine, so beautiful right now!"

"Why is that?" I shouted as loudly as I could.

Anastasia raised her arms toward the Sun and laughed her happy, alluring laugh, shouting her answer to me and someone else above in a singsong.

"Only man of all the creatures in the Universe can experience this!

"Only a man and a woman sincerely desiring to have a child from each other!

"Only someone who has experienced this lights a star in the sky!

"Only someone aspiring to create and build!

"Tha-a-ank you-ou-ou!"

Turning only to me, she added, "Only someone aspiring to create and build, not to satisfy his own carnal needs."

Once again she laughed her rippling laugh, leapt high, and stretched into a split, as if soaring over the fog. Then she ran up, sat down beside me at the entrance to our night's abode, and started combing her fingers through her golden hair, lifting it up from below.

"You mean you don't consider sex something sinful?" I asked.

Anastasia froze. She looked at me in amazement and replied, "Was that the sex your world means by that word? If not, then what is more sinful: giving yourself so that a person can come into this world, or refraining and not letting a person be born? A real, live person!"

I gave that some thought. Indeed, you could not use the usual word "sex" for my night's intimacy with Anastasia. So what had happened in the night? What word applied here?

Once again I asked, "Why is it that I have never known anything even resembling this before? I don't think many others have either."

"Understand, Vladimir, the forces of darkness are trying to develop base, carnal passions in man in order to keep him from experiencing God-given grace. They try every possible way to suggest that satisfaction is easily come by, thinking only about carnal satisfaction, and by doing this they lead man away from the truth.

"Poor deceived women who don't know this accept nothing but suffering their entire life, spend their entire life searching for that lost grace. They're looking in the wrong place.

"No woman can keep a man from straying if she surrenders to him for the sake of satisfying merely carnal needs. If that's what happens, their life together can't be

happy.

"Their life together is an illusion of togetherness, a lie, a conventionally accepted deceit. For the woman herself immediately becomes a whore, regardless of whether she is married to this man.

"Oh, how many laws and conventions has humanity devised to artificially reinforce this false union—laws spiritual and secular—all in vain. They merely force man to play-act, to adapt to them and only feign their union. Inner thoughts have always been immutable and not subject to anyone or anything.

"Jesus Christ saw that. And trying to counter this, he said, 'Whosoever looks on a woman with desire has already committed adultery with her in his heart.'

"Then you, in your near future, tried to brand the man who abandons his family with disgrace. But nothing, no time or situation, has ever kept man's desire from seeking intuitively felt grace and great satisfaction—no matter what.

"A false union is a terrible thing.

"The children! Understand, Vladimir. The children! They sense the artificiality and falseness of that kind of union, and they come to doubt everything their parents say. The children subconsciously sense the lie in their conception, and this makes them feel bad.



"Tell me, what person would want to come into the world as a result of merely carnal pleasures? Every person would like to have been created in a great surge of love, the desire to create, not come into the world as the result of carnal pleasures.

"Those who enter into a false union will later seek true satisfaction in secret from each other. They'll take more and more new bodies or use just their own bodies in a trivial and doomed way, aware only intuitively that the true grace of a true union keeps slipping away."

"Anastasia, wait a minute. Are man and woman really so doomed if the first time they just have sex? Is there really no recourse, no possibility of correcting their situation?"

"There is. Now I know what to do. But what words can I find and where? I keep searching for those words. I've searched in the past and future, but haven't found them. Could they be near at hand? New words are just about to appear, to be born, words capable of reaching hearts and minds—new words about the ancient truth of the primary sources."

"You mustn't get so upset, Anastasia. For now say it approximately, in the words you do have. What else is needed for true satisfaction besides two bodies?"

"Awareness! A mutual aspiration to create. Sincerity and purity of aspiration."

"How do you know all this, Anastasia?"

"I'm not the only one who knows about this. The enlightened Veles, Krishna, Rama, Shiva, Christ, Mohammad, and Buddha tried to explain the essence of this to people."

"You're telling me you've read about them? Where? When?"

"I haven't read about them, I just know what they said, thought about, and wanted."

"You mean you think just sex is bad?"

"Very bad. It leads man away from the truth and destroys families. A tremendous amount of energy escapes into nowhere."

"Then why are so many different magazines published with naked women in erotic poses and erotic films with sex? All this is very popular. Demand engenders supply. Do you mean to say that our humanity is completely bad?"

"Humanity isn't bad, but the mechanism of the dark forces, which eclipses spirituality and arouses base carnal desire, is very powerful. It brings many calamities and much suffering down on people. It operates through women by exploiting their beauty, a beauty that should engender and support the spirit of poet, artist, and creator in the man. But for this, the woman herself must be pure. If she lacks sufficient purity, she will try to attract a man with the charms of her flesh, the outward beauty of an

empty vessel. Thus, she deceives him, and for this deceit she herself will inevitably suffer her whole life."

"So what happens then? Through the millennia of its existence, has humanity been powerless to fight these dark forces? Then they must be more powerful than man. Humanity could not fight them, despite the summons from the spiritual and enlightened, as you say? Does this mean they simply cannot be fought? And must they?"

"They must, without fail!"

"Who can do this?"

"Women! Women who have managed to understand the truth and their purpose. Then the men will change, too."

"Hardly, Anastasia. A normal man will always be aroused by a woman's beautiful legs and breasts, especially when you find yourself traveling or vacationing far from your girlfriend. That's how it is. No one here can change anything or make it different."

"But I did it with you."

"What did you do?"

"Now you won't be able to have this pernicious sex."

The terrible thought struck me like a shock and began to drive out the beautiful feeling born in the night.

"What did you do, Anastasia? What? Now I ... I ... what, now I'm ... impotent?"

"On the contrary, now you've become a real man. Only

you'll find ordinary sex repugnant. It won't bring you what you experienced, and what you experienced is now possible only if you wish to have a child and if the woman wants the same from you. If she loves you."

"Loves me? But under those conditions . . . It might happen only a few times in my whole life."

"That's enough for you to be happy your whole life, I assure you, Vladimir. You'll understand. You'll feel it later."

"People enter into contact with just the flesh, and many times, and they don't know that no one can know true satisfaction just through their flesh."

"A man and a woman experience great satisfaction when they have united on all levels of being, in a rush of inspiration from the forces of light and aspiring to create. The Creator only gave it to man to know this. This satisfaction is not fleeting and cannot be compared with the carnal kind. You retain the sensations from it for a long time, and all planes of being make you and the woman happy—a woman capable of giving birth to a creation in the image and likeness of the Creator!"

Anastasia held out her hand to me and tried to move closer. I quickly jumped away from her, to the corner of the dugout, and shouted, "Stand clear of the exit!"

She stood up. I crawled outside. Anastasia was standing in front of me, and there was no blame in her gaze. I took

several steps back from her and said harshly, "You may have deprived me of the greatest pleasure in life. Everyone strives for it, everyone thinks about it, only they don't talk about it out loud."

"It's an illusion, these pleasures, Vladimir. I helped you rid yourself of this terrible, pernicious, and sinful impulse."

"Illusion or not, it doesn't matter. It is a universally recognized pleasure. Don't think of depriving me of other impulses you think are pernicious. Otherwise, I'll get out of here and won't want to be with women, have a drink, eat, or smoke! That's not the usual for the majority in normal life."

"Well, what's so good about drinking, smoking, and the senseless and pernicious digestion of such a huge quantity of animal flesh if so many marvelous plants have been created especially to feed man?"

"You go feed on your plants if you like them, but don't go meddling with me. Many of us take pleasure in smoking and drinking and dining well. That's how we do things, understand? That's how we do things!"

"But everything you've named is bad and pernicious."

"Bad? Pernicious? But this is precisely how most of my friends and acquaintances live. If guests come to my house for a special occasion, they sit down at the table,

and I tell them, 'Here, enjoy the nuts, eat a nice apple, drink some vodka, and don't smoke. Then you would feel terrible.'"

"You mean, when you gather with friends, you mainly sit down at the table immediately and drink, eat, and smoke?"

"Whether or not it's the main thing doesn't matter. This is the usual way all over the world for all people. In some countries even there are ritual dishes, roast turkey, for example."

"Not all the people even in your world do this."

"Maybe not all, but I live among normal people."

"Why do you think the people around you are the most normal?"

"Because they are the majority."

"That is not a good argument."

"It's not for you because it can't be explained to you."

My anger at Anastasia was starting to pass. I remembered what I'd heard about medicines and physician specialists and I thought, "If she's harmed me somehow, the doctors will be able to correct the situation." I said, "All right, Anastasia, let's come to an agreement. I'm not angry at you anymore. Thank you for a marvelous night. Only you have got to stop trying to rid me of my habits."

"I'll fix the sex problem with our doctors and modern medicines. Let's go for a swim."

I headed for the lake, admiring the morning forest. My good mood had started to return when she started in again! She was walking behind me and saying, "Your medicines and doctors won't help you now. To restore everything that was, they would have to wipe what happened and what you'd felt from your memory."

Taken aback, I stopped. "Then you have to restore it all."

"I can't either."

Once again, furious rage and fear overpowered me simultaneously.

"You . . . You really are brazen! You're interfering and spoiling my life. You mean you can do vile things but I can't fix them?"

"I haven't done anything vile. You wanted a son so much. But quite a few years have passed, and you don't have a son. And no woman in your life could bear you a son. I wanted a child from you, too, and a son, too, and I can. So why are you thinking the worst in advance, that things will be bad for you? You might understand yet. Please don't be afraid of me, Vladimir. I am absolutely not meddling in your psyche. It happened all by itself. Largely at your will. You got what you wanted.

"I wanted so badly to rid you of at least one mortal sin."

"Which is that?"

"Pride."

"You're an odd one. Your philosophy and way of life aren't human."

"What about me is so not human that it scares you?"

"You live alone in the forest and communicate with plants and beasts. No one lives even close to the way you do."

"Why do you think that is, Vladimir?" Anastasia began agitatedly. "The summer people communicate with plants and animals, too, though not consciously yet. But later they'll understand. Many are already beginning to understand."

"That's just great! She's a summer person. And this ray of yours. You don't read books, but you know a lot. It's some kind of hocus-pocus."

"I'll explain it all to you, Vladimir, only not all at once. I'm trying, but I can't seem to find the right words, understandable words. Please believe me, everything I do is inherent in man. He was given it from the very beginning, from the primary sources. Each person could do this. People will return to the primary sources anyway. This will happen gradually, when the forces of light are victorious."

"And your concert? You sang all the voices and depicted my favorite singers, and even in the order on my video."

"This is how it happened, Vladimir. I once saw that video. I'll tell you later how that came to be."



"So you just remembered the words and tunes of all the songs at once?"

"Yes. What's so difficult or mystical about that? Oh, what have I said! I was showing off! I frightened you! I'm doubtless incoherent and impetuous. My grandfather called me that once. I thought he said it out of love. But doubtless I truly am impetuous. Please. . . . Vladimir. . . ."

Anastasia spoke in a humanly agitated way, and probably for that reason my fear of her almost abated. The thought of a son occupied all my emotions.

"Oh, I'm not afraid anymore, just restrain yourself a little more. Your grandfather used to tell you that, too."

"Yes. My grandfather. But I keep talking and talking. I want so badly to tell you everything. I'm a blabbermouth, aren't I? Right? But I'll try. I'll try very hard to restrain myself. I'll try to say only what's understandable."

"Does this mean you'll give birth soon, Anastasia?"

"Naturally! Only not in time."

"What do you mean not in time?"

"I should in the summer, when nature would help me nurse it."

"Then why did you decide to go ahead if it's so risky for you and the child?"

"Don't worry, Vladimir, your son will live, at least."

"And you?"

"I will try to hold out until spring, and then everything will fall into place."

Anastasia said this without a shadow of sadness or fear for her life, and then she took a running start and leapt into the small lake. Splashes of water sparkling in the sun flew up like fireworks and dropped into the lake's pure smoothness. About thirty seconds later her body slowly began to surface. She lay on the water smiling, her arms flung to either side and her palms facing up.

I stood on shore looking at her and thinking, "Will the squirrel hear her snap her fingers when she's lying with the baby in one of her shelters? Will any of her four-legged friends help her? Will her body's warmth be enough to warm the little one?"

"If my body grows cold and the child has nothing to eat, he will cry," Anastasia said softly as she emerged from the water. "His angry cry may arouse pre-Spring nature or some of it, and then it will all be fine. They will nurse him."

"You were reading my thoughts?"

"No, I assumed that was what you were thinking. It's natural."

"Anastasia, you said your relatives live in neighboring areas. Could they help you?"

"They're very busy and cannot be torn away from their

affairs."

"What are they busy with, Anastasia? What do you do for days on end, if you're basically fully served by nature?"

"I have things to do. I try to help the people of your world whom you call summer people or gardeners."

## HER BELOVED SUMMER PEOPLE

Anastasia waxed enthusiastic about the opportunities people have who communicate with plants. In general, Anastasia spoke with special awe, fervor, and absolute infatuation on two subjects: childrearing and summer people. If I told you everything she said about summer people and the significance she ascribed to them, you would have to get down on your knees before them. My goodness. She believed they'd saved everyone from starvation, were sowing good in people's souls, and were raising the society of the future. If I listed everything, I'd need a separate book. She also tried to prove and supply arguments in support of all this.

"You have to understand, the society you live in today can understand a lot by communicating with the plants being sown at dachas. It's at the dachas where you know every plant in your garden,, not in the huge, impersonal fields that stupid monster machines crawl over. People feel better working at their dachas, and this has lengthened many people's lives. It makes them better, and it is the summer people who can help society understand just how pernicious the technocratic path is."

"Anastasia, whether or not that's true doesn't matter now. Where do you come in here? What does your assistance consist of?"

She grabbed my hand and pulled me onto the grass. We lay on our backs with our hands turned palms up.

"Close your eyes, relax, and try to picture what I'm going to say. Right now I'm going to use my ray to find, to see at a distance, one of those you call summer people.

She was silent for a while, then she began to speak softly.

"An elderly woman is unfolding a cheesecloth that cucumber seeds have been soaking in. The seeds have already sprouted and you can see little shoots. She's picked up one seed. And here I've hinted to her that she shouldn't soak the seeds like that because the shoots will be deformed when they're planted. That kind of water isn't quite right for nourishing them, and the seed will be sick. She thinks she has guessed this herself. And yes, that's partly true. I just gave her a little help. Now she's sharing her thoughts and telling other people about this. A small deed is done."

Anastasia told me how she modeled in her consciousness every possible kind of situation in work, rest, and interactions between people and between people and plants. When the situation she modeled came closest to the real-

ity, contact was established, and she could see the person and sense what ailed him and what he was feeling. It was as though she entered into his image and shared her knowledge. Anastasia said that plants reacted to a person, could help him love or hate, and could have a positive or negative effect on his health.

"Here, too, I have a great deal of work. I'm busy with dacha gardens. The summer people go to their plots to see their plants as if they were their children, but unfortunately they're intuitive, their relations. They haven't yet been reinforced by a clear awareness of this connection's true purpose.

Everything on Earth—every blade of grass, every single bug—was created for man and has its task and purpose in serving man. The many medicinal plants confirm this. But a person of your world knows too little to make use of the opportunity he has been offered for his well-being—full use of it."

I asked Anastasia to show me by concrete example the benefit from conscious communication, so that I could verify it in practice, see it, and subject it to scientific study. Anastasia gave that a little thought. Suddenly her whole face beamed, and she exclaimed, "My summer people! My beloved summer people! They will prove everything and stump your science. How could I not have

figured that out before? How could I not have understood?"

Some idea born in her had brought her tumultuous joy.

I never once saw Anastasia sad. She could be serious, thoughtful, and focused, but more often she was rejoicing in something. This time she was riotously joyous. She leapt up and clapped her hands, and the forest seemed to grow brighter. The forest stirred and responded to her with rustling treetops and the voices of birds.

She was spinning, as if in a dance. Then, beaming, she sat back down beside me and said, "Now they'll believe it! And these are my dear summer people. They will explain and prove everything to you."

I tried to return her as quickly as possible to our interrupted conversation and remarked, "That's not at all necessary. You declare that every bug was created for the good of man, but how are people to believe this who look with disgust at cockroaches crawling across kitchen tables? Are they created for our good, too?"

"Cockroaches only crawl across a dirty table," Anastasia replied, "to collect the remains of decaying pieces of food that are sometimes invisible to the eye, digest them, and then deposit the harmless waste in a secluded place. If you get a lot of them, bring a frog into the house, and the excess ones will leave immediately."

Anastasia went on to suggest that what summer people do probably contradicts the science of horticulture and without a doubt contradicts the usual rules for planting and growing various types of crops in vegetable plots. However, her assertions are so grandiose that I think everyone who has the opportunity should test them, maybe not in their entire garden, but in a small part of it, especially since it promises nothing but good. In addition, much of what she said has already been confirmed in experiments by the biologist N. M. Prokhorov.



# FROM THE ADVICE OF ANASTASIA

## The Seed Is a Doctor

"Each seed you plant contains a huge amount of universal information," said Anastasia. "Nothing man-made can compare to it for size and accuracy. This information allows the seed to know precisely, down to the millisecond, when it needs to come to life and grow, what juices to take from the earth, and how to use the emanation from the Sun, the Moon, and the stars. It knows what to grow into and what fruits to bear.

"Fruits are intended to give man sustenance. These fruits can effectively fight and resist any illness of the human organism more powerfully than any man-made medicines that exist today or will in the future. But to do this, the seed has to know about the person's condition. In order for it to be saturated during the ripening process, the fruit needs the correlation of substances for healing a specific person and his illness, if he has one or a predisposi-

tion toward one.

"In order for the seed of a cucumber, tomato, or any other plant grown in a garden to have information about a person's health, the following is essential.

"Before planting, take one or several small seeds in your mouth and hold them under your tongue for at least nine minutes.

"Then put them between your palms and hold them like that for about thirty seconds.

"While holding the seeds between your palms, you must be standing barefoot on the plot of land where you will later plant.

"Open your palms, carefully lift the seed that lies in your hand toward your mouth, and blow the air from your lungs on the seed. You warm it with your breath, and the tiny seed gets to know what is inside you.

"After that, hold your palms open for thirty seconds, presenting the seed to the heavenly bodies. The seed will determine the instant of its ascent. All the planets will help it! And for you they will bestow on the shoots the light they need.

"Then you can plant the seed in the earth. In no case should you water immediately or you will wash your saliva and information off the whole seed, and the seed needs to take that in. Three days after planting you may water.

"The planting must be done on each vegetable's favorable days (man already knows this, according to the lunar calendar). Planting early without watering is not as terrible as planting late.

"You shouldn't remove all the weeds next to the shoot coming from your seed. You have to leave at least one of each kind. The weeds can be cut down."

In this way, according to Anastasia, the seed takes in information about the person, and while its fruit is growing, it will take from the Cosmos and Earth the maximum energy essential for this specific person.

You shouldn't remove all the weeds because they have their own purpose. Some protect the plants from disease; others provide additional information. During its growth, you must communicate with the plant. At least once during its growing period, preferably on the full moon, go up to it and touch it.

Anastasia said that fruits grown from a seed in this way and used by the person who grew them are capable of curing him of absolutely any disease of the flesh, significantly slowing the organism's aging, ridding him of harmful habits, increasing his intellectual abilities multifold, and giving him emotional peace.

The fruits will be most effective if they are used no more than three days after harvesting.

The above actions must be done with the various types of crops planted in the garden.

You do not have to sow the entire plot of cucumbers, tomatoes, and so on in this way. A few plants are sufficient.

Fruits raised by the method indicated will not only taste different from others. If they are subjected to analysis, the correlation of substances they contain will differ as well.

When planting seedlings in a scooped-out indentation, you absolutely must work the earth with your own hands and bare toes and spit in the indentation. When asked, "Why the feet?" Anastasia explained that substances (toxins, probably) containing information about the organism's illnesses are sweated out through the feet. The seedlings take in this information and convey it to the fruits, which will be capable of fighting the ailments. Anastasia advised walking through the garden barefoot from time to time.

Which crops should be cultivated?

Anastasia replied, "The variety in most gardens is sufficient: raspberries, currants, gooseberries, cucumbers, tomatoes, strawberries, and any apple. It's very good to have sweet or sour cherries and flowers. The number and plot size of these crops doesn't matter.

"The essential ones without which it's hard to offer a full-energy microclimate in a garden include plants like

sunflowers (at least one). It is absolutely essential that you sow an area of one and a half to two square meters in grains—rye and wheat—and leave an island of at least two square meters for miscellaneous herbs. This island cannot be sown artificially; it has to be natural. If you don't have herbs preserved in your garden, you have to bring in sod from the forest to create that island."

I asked Anastasia if one had to plant the crops she classified directly in the garden, as she specified, if there were various herbs on the other side of the fence, not far from the plot.

"What matters is not only the variety of plants, but also how they are planted, the direct communication with them, through which the saturation of information occurs," she answered. "I already told you about the main method of planting. The important thing is to saturate the piece of nature that surrounds you with information about yourself. Only then will the healing effect and the life support for just your organism be significantly higher than from the fruits alone. In wild nature, as you call it—though it isn't wild, it's just unfamiliar to you—there are lots of plants you can use to heal absolutely every existing disease. That's why these plants were created, but man has lost or nearly lost the ability to determine them."

I told Anastasia we had many specialized pharmacies

that sold healing herbs, and there were both doctors and simply healers who healed with herbs professionally, to which she replied, "The main doctor is your organism. From the very beginning, it was given the knowledge of which herb you should use and when, as well as how in general to feed yourself and breathe. It can avert illness even before its outward manifestation. And no one else can replace your organism, for this is the doctor God personally gave you and only you. I'm telling you how to give it the chance to act for your good.

"When you have established relationships with the plants in your garden they will heal and take care of you. They will independently give an exact diagnosis and manufacture the special medicine that is most effective for you specifically."

## Who Bees Sting

"Every garden needs to have at least one bee family."

I told her that only a few of us could handle bees. People study in special schools for this, but even for them it didn't always work out.

But she replied, "Much of what you do for the bee family's life support gets in the way. In the last few thousand years only two people on earth have come a little closer to understanding this unique living mechanism."

"Who were they?"

"Two monks, and they have been made saints. You can read about them in your books, which are in monastery repositories."

"You mean you read church literature, Anastasia? Where and when? You don't have a single book."

"I use a more perfected method of obtaining information."

"What method? You're saying something incomprehensible again. You did promise no hocus-pocus or fantasy."

"I'll tell you about it, and I can try to teach you. Right now you won't understand, but it's simple and natural."

"All right, then, how should bees be kept in gardens?"

"You just have to make them a nest similar to what they

have in natural conditions, and that's it. The only work beyond that might be to take some of the honey, wax, and other very beneficial substances the bees produce."

"Anastasia , that isn't simple at all. Who knows what this natural nest should be? If you had told me how to make it myself out of the materials we have on hand, then that would be doable."

"All right"—she laughed—"then you'll have to wait a little. I have to model it, you know, see what modern people might have on hand, as you say."

"And where to put it so as not to spoil the view?" I added.

"I'll try that as well."

She lay down on the grass, as she did every time she modeled her, or rather our, life situations, but this time I observed her carefully. Anastasia lay on the grass, her arms stretched out to the sides, palms up. Her fingers were curved, and their tips, or rather, the tips of the four fingers on each hand, were also facing pads up.

First her fingers moved the barest bit, then they stopped.

Her eyes were closed. Her body was completely relaxed. At first her face was relaxed as well, and then the barest shadow of some emotion or sensation passed across it.

Later she explained the accessibility of vision at a dis-



tance to anyone taught in a specific way.

But about the beehive Anastasia told me the following.

"You have to make a trough. You can use a log with a hollow, which you can enlarge, or make it out of boards of deciduous species. The boards should be at least six centimeters thick, the inner volume at least forty by forty centimeters, and the length at least one hundred twenty centimeters. Attach small triangular laths to the corners of the inner joints so that the corners are rounded. The laths can be glued on lightly; the bees themselves will secure them afterward. You can cover one butt end completely with a board of the same thickness and make the other end open. To do this, bend the board so that you can attach it after packing it with grass or a cloth. At the same time, cover the entire bottom with a cloth. All along the length of one of the joints, make a groove approximately one and a half centimeters deep. The grooves or single groove should stop thirty centimeters from the open butt end. This trough can be placed somewhere in the garden, on palings.

"The trough has to be at least twenty or twenty-five centimeters off the ground. Make the grooves face south. But it's even better to attach it under the roof of the house. Then man won't keep the bees from flying out, and they won't disturb him.

"The trough has to be attached horizontally at a twenty-to thirty-degree incline.

"The open butt end has to be on the bottom. You can put the trough in the attic, too, but then there has to be good ventilation.

"The best is to attach the trough to the south side right under the roof of the house or on the roof itself. You need only provide a way to get at the trough to remove some of the honey-filled combs.

"There should be an awning over the trough to keep the sun off and it should stand on a platform. You can heat it in winter."

I pointed out to Anastasia that this kind of trough would be so heavy that the tent and platform might spoil the look of the house. What could we do in that case?" Slightly surprised, she looked at me and said, "The problem is that your beekeepers' methods aren't quite correct. My grandfather used to tell me. Modern beekeepers have invented all kinds of hive constructions, and all of them assume man's constant interference in the bees' nest. Beekeepers swap out the frames of combs, and in winter they drag the hives and bees to another spot, and you should never do that.

"Bees build their combs a strictly defined distance apart from one another. They themselves provide an entire sys-

tem for ventilation and for fighting their enemies, and any interference damages this system. Instead of collecting the honey and raising new bees, they have to fix what was destroyed.

"In natural conditions, bees live in the hollows of trees and cope with all their own problems just fine. I've told you how to keep them in conditions closest to natural ones. The benefit from their presence is very great. They are the most effective at pollinating all the plants and they raise yield, but you must know that well.

"What you might not know is that bees, on top of everything else, use their proboscis to open up the channels in the plant for additional information reflected by the planets to enter—information the plant, and therefore man, needs."

"But bees sting people. What kind of rest at the dacha is it if a person lives in constant fear?"

"Bees sting when man treats them aggressively, waves his hands, becomes frightened, and feels very aggressive—toward anyone, not necessarily the bees. They sense that and don't absorb the emanations from any dark feelings. They can also sting parts of the body where there are endings leading to some organ of the person that's diseased and where the protective membrane has been broken and there is other damage.

"You know how effectively bees cure the illness you call radiculitis, but this is far from the only one they can cure.

"If I were tell you about all them, and also to prove it to you, the way you want me to, you would have to spend weeks with me, not a few days. You've heard a lot about bees, and I've just made a few corrections to that information. Please believe me: they're substantive. It's very simple to install a family in a hive like this. You have to pour the bee swarm into it, but first you have to put in a piece of wax and a bee-plant. You don't need any homemade frames or combs. Later, when the families are living in at least a few neighboring gardens, the bees themselves will multiply, and swarm, and they will occupy free troughs."

"But how do you collect the honey from them?"

"Open the butt-end cover, break off the hanging combs, and remove the sealed honey and pollen. Only don't be greedy. You have to leave some of it for the bees for the winter. And the first year it's better not to collect the honey at all."

## "Hello, Morning!"

Anastasia adapted her morning routine to the conditions of a dacha garden.

"In the morning, preferably at sunrise, go out to the garden barefoot and walk up to whichever plants you feel like walking up to. You may touch them, not necessarily according to some template or ritual repeated strictly day in and day out, but however you feel, however you wish. However, you must do this before washing. Then the plants will smell the substances your body has discharged through the pores of your skin while you were asleep. If it's warm and there is at least a small patch of grass nearby—as there should be—you should lie down on it and stretch for a few minutes. If a bug crawls on your body, don't drive it off. Many bugs open up and cleanse the pores on the body. As a rule, they open up the pores toxins are discharged through, toxins that bring all kinds of internal ailments to the skin's surface, allowing the person to wipe them away. If there is some body of water on your land, plunge into it. If not, you can douse yourself with water. When you do, you must stand barefoot not far from the beds and plants—even better, between the beds, or for example, one morning next to the raspberry bushes, an-

other the currants, and so on. Don't dry off after pouring the water. Shake drops of water off your hand as if you were showering them on the surrounding plants. You also need to fling drops of water off other parts of your body with your hands. After that, you can perform your normal ablutions and use the devices you're used to."

## Evening Routine

"In the evening, before you go to bed, you should wash your feet, using water with a small quantity (a few drops) of orache or nettle juice added. You can use both together without soap or shampoo. Pour the water you use to wash your feet on the beds. After which, if there's any need, you may wash your feet with soap. This evening routine is important for two reasons. Toxins come out through the sweating of the feet, ridding the organism of internal diseases, and you have to wash them in order to cleanse the pores. Orache and nettle juice do this very well. By pouring the water out on the beds, you give additional information to the microorganisms and plants about your condition that day. This is very important, too. Only by receiving this information can the visible and invisible world around you produce—by taking it from the Cosmos and Earth—everything needed for the normal functioning of your organism."

## He Prepares Everything Himself

I was also interested in learning what she would say about nourishment. After all, she herself ate in such an unusual way.

"Anastasia, tell me how you think man should nourish himself, what he should eat and when, how many times a day, and in what quantity. We have a lot of attention being paid to this question. There is a great deal of literature of all kinds, recipes for healthy eating, dieting advice."

"It's hard to imagine man's way of life in the conditions of the technocratic world any other way. The forces of darkness are constantly trying to replace the natural mechanism of this world, given to man in the beginning, with their unwieldy, artificial system, which contradicts human nature."

I asked Anastasia to speak more specifically and understandably, without her philosophical musings.

She continued. "You understand, your questions—what, when, and in what quantity man should eat—cannot be answered better than by each specific person's organism."

"Hunger and thirst were given us to signal to each person individually when he needs to consume food. That is the moment most favorable for each person."



"The technocratic world cannot give man the opportunity to satisfy his hunger and thirst at the moment his organism desired, and then it began to drive man into a template conditioned by his own helplessness, while also justifying it by a certain logic.

"Picture this. One person sits for half a day barely expending energy; another performs some physical labor or simply runs, pouring sweat, expending ten times more energy. Yet they are supposed to nourish themselves at the same time.

"Man should consume food the moment his organism advises him to, and there can be no other advisor. I understand that under your circumstances this is nearly impracticable, but people at their gardens, next to their dwellings, have that opportunity, and they should take advantage of it, tossing aside unnatural, artificial guidelines.

"I can say the same thing in reply to your question of what man should eat. The answer is what is at hand at the given moment. The organism itself selects what it needs. From what is nontraditional I can advise the following. If there is some kind of animal near your dwelling (a cat or dog), watch it carefully. From time to time it will pick some herb out of the many kinds and eat it. You should pick at least a few of these herbs and add them to your food. You don't have to do this every day. Once or twice a

week is enough.

"You should also collect the grains yourself, pound and grind them, make flour, and bake bread. This is especially important. The person who consumes this bread just once or twice a year gains a store of energy and the ability to activate his inner psychic forces. It will have a positive effect on his physical condition and soothe his soul. You can give this bread to your relatives, the people closest to you, as well. It will also have a highly beneficial effect on them if you give it sincerely and with good intention.

"At least once a summer, for three days, it is very beneficial for each person's health to feed himself only with what grows in his garden, also consuming bread, sunflower oil, and a minimum of salt."

I've already told you how Anastasia fed herself. Even while she was telling her story, she would unconsciously pick one herb, and then another, chew it herself, and give it to me. I decided to try it, too. Its taste made no impression, but it wasn't revolting either.

The process of nourishing and sustaining the life of Anastasia's organism seemed to have been entrusted to nature and never interfered with her thoughts, which were engaged with other problems. Meanwhile, her health was an inalienable part of her extraordinary outward beauty.

According to Anastasia, the organism of someone who

has established relations like this with the plant world and the earth of his garden can rid himself completely of all diseases.

In and of itself, disease is a fact of man's alienation from the natural mechanisms that are supposed to watch after his health and sustain his life. For them, for these mechanisms, fighting any illness presents no problem, for therein lies the essence of their existence. The benefit someone can derive—someone who has established informational contact by getting close to his small garden in the natural world—is significantly greater than fighting disease.

## DREAMING UNDER YOUR STAR

I've already spoken about how enthusiastic Anastasia would get talking about plants and the people who communicated with them. I thought that living in nature as she did, she had studied only nature well, but she possessed information on the planets as well. She seemed actually to feel the heavenly bodies. Judge for yourself how she spoke about sleeping under a starry sky.

"After receiving information about a specific person, the plants enter into an exchange of information with cosmic forces, but they are only intermediaries carrying out a narrow task affecting the flesh and a few spiritual planes. They never come in contact with the complex processes inherent to the human brain alone of all the planet's animal and plant world and inherent only on the human planes of being. However, the resulting information exchange allows man to do what he alone is capable of doing: benefit from the cosmic intellect, or, to be more precise, exchange information with it. The procedure, which is not at all complicated, makes it possible to create and feel the salutariness of this effect.

Anastasia explained it as follows.

"One evening, when weather conditions permit, plan to spend your night under a starry sky.

"You must make your bed not far from raspberry or currant bushes or plantings of grain.

"You must be alone.

"Lying in your bed facing the starry sky, don't close your eyes right away. Let your gaze and thoughts roam through the cosmic bodies. Don't tense up thinking about them. Your thoughts should be light and free.

"First, try to think about the heavenly bodies most visible to you. Then you can daydream a little about what is precious to you, the people close to you, those whom you wish good.

"Don't even try to think in that moment about revenge or wishing anyone ill. The effect could be harmful to you.

"This simple procedure will revive some of the many cells sleeping in your brain, most of which never do wake up during an entire human life.

"The cosmic forces will be with you and help you achieve your most inconceivable and brightest dreams, acquire spiritual peace, enjoy auspicious relations with the people close to you, and strengthen or evoke their love for you.

"It is very useful to perform this procedure several times. It is effective not only in places where you have continu-

ous contact with the plant world. You will feel this in the morning yourself.

"It is especially important to perform this procedure on the eve of each of your birthdays. It would take a long time to explain right now how this works, and there would be no point. Some of the explanations you wouldn't believe, and some you wouldn't understand. It will be significantly easier and briefer to talk about this with those who have already tried it and experienced its effect, for the information obtained and verified will facilitate perception of what follows."

## STAR WOMAN

One night during my visit with Anastasia, I had occasion to see how she herself communicates with the stars.

The night before, Anastasia said, "Vladimir, the coming night is significant for me. I won't be able to sleep next to you. But don't worry. I can call on the wolf cub, and it will guard you and the entrance to the dugout while you're sleeping."

I had no desire to sleep alone in the dugout. The access to it could not be shut off, and any beast could come in and attack a sleeping person. The beasts protected Anastasia, but they might not like me if I was left alone. They might not even do anything bad to me, but the alarm and fear would keep me from falling asleep. I asked, "Anastasia, where will you be tonight?"

"I'll be in the water on the lake, Vladimir."

"You mean you'll be swimming. Do you really have to go for a swim tonight in particular?"

"Yes, Vladimir, there is only one night like this each year, and I mustn't miss it."

I didn't try to question her as to why she had to be in the lake this night in particular. I was more interested in how I

was going to keep myself safe. So I suggested, "I could go to the lake with you. I could sit on the shore while you swim."

"All right, Vladimir. Only dress warmly and let's take dry grass so if you feel like it you can sleep on it."

And that is what we did. When it grew dark, I lay down on the dry grass and watched what happened.

The night was warm and still. The tree tops were not making noise, and there wasn't even any chirring in the grass or rustling from the taiga's nocturnal inhabitants. The many stars shone unusually brightly in the clear sky.

Anastasia stood on the shore of the lake and gazed silently at its smooth surface, where stars large and small were reflected as in a mirror. Then she removed her shift and walked into the lake naked. For a while she stood up to her knees in the water. Then she sat down and cautiously stroked the water with the palms of her hands. All of a sudden Anastasia dove into the starry scattering reflected in the water. She dove carefully, without disturbing the water in the least. Surfacing, she swam slowly in a circle. Gradually she reduced the diameter of her circles until she was exactly in the middle of the lake. There she turned on her back and lay on the water, facing the sky, her hands stretched out to the sides.

Because the heavenly stars were reflected in the lake's



water, she seemed to be lying in the middle of a space filled with heavenly bodies on all sides, above and below, and she herself seemed to be a part of the starry assemblage.

The water in the lake pulsed with a soft, barely perceptible, varicolored light. The starry lake and the entire space around it cast a spell, and I fell asleep thinking of nothing.

I awoke at dawn, when the stars were no longer reflected in the lake. Anastasia was sitting next to me wearing her knitted shift, her arms clasping her knees and her head resting on them. She didn't stir.

Although it was very early morning, I couldn't fall back to sleep. I wanted to find out why she had performed that strange nocturnal procedure.

I moved toward Anastasia, and stroking her hand for some reason said, "Please don't take offense at what I'm going to say to you, Anastasia."

"Speak, Vladimir. I won't take offense."

"This night was very beautiful on the lake. I've never seen such beauty in my life or experienced such a pleasant sensation. It seemed as if the lake were in the middle of the universe, not the Siberian taiga. Only you shouldn't have been in the water so long, Anastasia. You have to take care of yourself now. I don't think you should be performing the kind of procedures you did last night. After all,

the water is no longer warm enough for swimming and you might catch cold or something else bad might happen. You're with child and have to take care of yourself, especially since I see no point to this procedure or ritual."

"There is a point to what I did, Vladimir."

"What?"

"My mama washed me with the water from this lake when I came into the world. Water is very, very important. It is present in all that lives and exists in the universe."

"The water of life holds all the information about the creation of life in the universe. It also holds all the thoughts and feelings man has ever produced. Water can also sense and react to human emotions."

"Perhaps that's so, Anastasia—I don't know—but why swim in the lake at night? What do you need that for?"

"I want to learn how people have lived from their very first appearance up until the present day, Vladimir, to determine when and at what moments and ages they were happiest, what brought them the greatest happiness. Then I want to tell the people of today about this, so that they can be happy, so that our children can be happy."

"But is it really possible to know the deeds of people who lived centuries ago?"

"Yes, Vladimir. When a child is born, as he grows up he comes to resemble his parents outwardly and not only

outwardly, but he also resembles the first man. He has the same blood, and deep in his memory he retains all the information, starting from the creation, only he doesn't think about that information. If he tries, though, he can remember everything."

"Let's say he can, but these memories will be only about the ancestors of a specific person."

"Naturally, Vladimir—naturally only from his ancestors about their ancestors. The memory in my cells shows me scenes from the life of my, and only my, distant ancestors."

Anastasia jumped up, ran to the lake, and cautiously touched the water, then she turned toward me and continued.

"But the water knows about the past of all people. It has in it information about everyone and everything that has ever happened in the universe. And it is helping me see this. When I'm in the water in the middle of the lake and I think, it thinks with me and searches for the right scenes. It even scans everything happening on all the planets, because it is everywhere.

The stars are reflected in the lake, and the stars are reflected in my eyes, and at that moment we are one. All the information of the Universe becomes accessible to man, for at that moment he feels like a tiny part of the Universe.

The Universe rejoices when man feels like a tiny part of it and is ready to serve him, to turn what man has contemplated into a reality."

I listened to Anastasia speaking with calm confidence about the universe, stars, and water, and I thought, "Here is a beautiful young woman living in the taiga, and she has none of the daily problems we do in our technocratic world. Maybe this is why her thoughts and notions about the universe are so unusual. She speaks with such confidence about her ideas of the world that I feel awkward talking to her about my doubts about her statements." Out loud I said, "Anastasia, you analyze the life of humanity as if you were a research scientist. What period of time have you been able to examine?"

"Very little so far, just nine millennia."

"Your very little is quite a lot. And what conclusions have you drawn from what you've seen?"

"I'll tell you about my conclusions later, Vladimir, or just show you the scenes I saw, and you and other people can draw your own conclusions."

"People can draw conclusions, of course, if they believe what you've said. For instance, you say unusual things about water, but where is the proof that water stores information and reacts to human emotions on top of that?"

"I think your contemporary scientists have it."

"If so, I haven't heard anything. We have a simple attitude toward water. It's just water, a tiny part of man's environment."

"Yes, a tiny part, a living part. Hardly anyone thinks of it as a living being. You ask for proof, even though the large part of your body consists of water.

"I can tell you about actions any person can use for himself to feel the great possibilities of living water, Vladimir."

"Tell me."

"You or those who want to experience water's healing properties must first find the spring with the water that tastes best to you.

"Bring that water home, pour it into vessels, and freeze it. Every evening put the amount of water you need for a day on the table in a handsome vessel, preferably with a piece of green fabric underneath the vessel.

"Before going to sleep, you have to say good words to the water, or you can just think tenderly about it.

"The room shouldn't be too warm because a little bit of ice should remain in the water. If it doesn't, you need to add a piece of the ice stored separately in the cold.

"It is good to add a small piece of the ice to warm water, too. And to the hot tea you drink.

"As the ice melts, it is good to think about the water

with tenderness, and you can say nice words to it, as if it were a living being. You can put one drop of cedar oil into the melted water. No matter what volume of water this drop falls into, the information from it will spread throughout the water, and this information is very important.

"Before going to sleep, you can stroke the vessel of water and exhale the air from yourself onto the water.

"The next day, when you wake up, say good morning to the water. It's good to drink the water in small, unhurried sips.

"You can also wet your face with it.

"If you have any ailments in your body, the water will start to heal them and will definitely cure them. You will feel the improvement in three days.

"If you use the water for ninety-nine days, even serious diseases will leave your body, and you will see the skin on your face improve noticeably.

"If you want your body to be younger and your thinking to move more rapidly, then in addition to the water you can use cedar oil in the morning, at noon, and at nightfall, one sip each time, and also honey from various herbs and flower pollen in whatever quantity you find pleasing. But you mustn't mix them with the water. If you do this for thirty days, you will begin to think faster, and your body

will be younger."

"Anastasia, what you have told me is worthy of attention because scientists and ordinary people alike can verify what you said. But how do you know all this? From your ancestors?"

"From the water," Anastasia said, and she began to laugh and spin, rejoicing at something. Then she stopped and added seriously, "I also know this from the stars."

## YOUR CHILD'S HELPER AND TEACHER

When I asked Anastasia how a plot of land with plants—even if they're planted in a special way and are in contact with man—could help raise children, I expected to hear an answer from her about how essential it was to instill a love of nature in children, but I was wrong. What she said amazed me with the simplicity of its argument and the profundity of its philosophical thought.

"Nature and the mind of the Universe made sure that each new person was born a sovereign, a king! He is like an angel, pure and immaculate. The still open seed receives a huge stream of information from the universe. Each newborn's abilities allow him to become the wisest being in the Universe, akin to God. It takes him very little time to bestow happiness and grace on his parents. He is conscious of the essence of the universe and the meaning of human existence for a span of just nine Earth years. And everything he needs for this already exists. Parents merely need not to distort the real natural universe or separate the child from the Universe's most perfect creations.

"But the technocratic world doesn't let parents do that.



"What does an infant see with his first conscious look? He sees a ceiling, the edge of his little bed, a few scraps of cloth, and walls—the attributes and values of an artificial world created by a technocratic society. And in this world is his mother, her breast. 'That means this is probably how it should be,' he thinks.

"His smiling parents bring him clattering, squeaking objects and toys as if they were something precious. Why? He will spend a long time trying to understand why they clatter and squeak.

"He will try to make sense of this consciously and subconsciously.

"Then these same smiling parents will tie him up in cloths, and he'll be uncomfortable. He'll try to free himself, but in vain! And his only way to protest will be to cry out! A cry of protest, a plea for help, a cry of indignation. At that moment the angel and sovereign becomes a beggar, a slave pleading for charity.

"The child is offered one attribute of the artificial world after another. As a treat—a new toy, new clothes. And in this way his parents will suggest that these objects represent what is most important in the world he has come into.

"Though he is still small, he is already the most perfect being in the Universe, but they will speak baby talk with him, treating him as if he were an imperfect being. Even in

those institutions where you think teaching is going on, they will again speak to him of the virtues of the artificial world.

"Only as he nears nine will they mention in passing the existence of nature, as if it were an appendix to something else, to the main thing, by which they mean what is man-made.

"To the end of their days, most people are incapable of realizing the truth. You'd think it was a simple question: What is the meaning of life? Yet it remains unanswered.

"But the meaning of life lies in truth, joy, and love.

"A nine-year-old child raised by the natural world has more a more accurate awareness of the universe than the scientific institutions of your world and many scientists recognized by your society."

"Stop, Anastasia. You mean knowledge of nature probably?

"If his life is going to be spent like yours, then I can agree with you. But modern man is compelled—whether for good or ill is another question—but he is compelled to live in our technocratic world, as you call it.

"Someone raised the way you propose will know nature and will have a feel for it but will be a total ignoramus in the other. There are also sciences like mathematics, physics, and chemistry, and basic knowledge of life and its so-

cial phenomena."

"For someone who has once known the essence of the universe, all this is trivial. If he wants to, if he feels he needs to make a mark in some science, then he will easily surpass those who have not known the foundations of the universe."

"Why would that be?"

"The man of the technocratic world has yet to invent anything nature doesn't have. Even perfected man-made mechanisms are but a pathetic likeness of what already exists in nature."

"Fine, let's say that's true. You did promise to tell me how a child can be raised and his abilities developed in our conditions. Only speak understandably. Show me using specific examples."

"I'll try," Anastasia replied. "I've already modeled these situations and attempted to suggest to one family what needed to be done, but they just couldn't comprehend the key point and ask their child a question. These parents had an unusually pure and capable child. He could have brought much benefit to those living on Earth. But when the parents take their three-year-old child with them to their dacha plot they bring along his favorite toys, artificial toys that displace the Universe's true priorities."

"Oh, if only they didn't do that! After all, the child could

be occupied and distracted by something else more interesting than the meaningless and even harmful contact with man-made objects.

"Above all, ask him to help you. But do this in all seriousness, especially since he really will help you.

"If you are planting, ask him to hold the seeds ready for planting, or hoe the bed, or put the seed in the prepared depression himself. While you're doing this, tell him what you are doing. For example, you can say, 'We are putting the seed in the earth and sprinkling it with earth. When the nice sun shines and warms the earth, the seed will warm up and start to grow. It will want to take a look at the nice sun so a green shoot will peek out of the earth, like this one.' Here you need to show him a blade of grass. 'If the shoot likes it, it will get bigger and bigger and may turn into a tree or something smaller, a flower. I also want it to give us tasty fruit, which you will eat if you like it. The shoot is preparing its fruit for you.'

"Each time you come to your garden with your child or he wakes up in the morning, the first thing you need to suggest to him is to go see if a shoot has appeared. If you see a new shoot, rejoice.

"When you plant a seedling instead of seeds, you must also explain to the child what you are doing. If you're transplanting tomato seedlings, let him bring you one

stem at a time. If he breaks it by accident, take the broken stem in your hands and say, 'I don't think this one is going to live and bear us fruit. It's broken. But let's try to plant it anyway.' Plant at least one broken one among the others. In a few days, when you and your child go up to the bed again with the now started tomato plants, show your little one the broken one, too, the withering stem, and remind the child that it was broken during planting. Do not speak to the child in a condescending tone. Talk to him as your equal. You have to be aware that in some ways he surpasses you, for instance, in purity of intention. He is an angel. If you can understand that, you can act intuitively in the future, and your child truly will become a person who makes you happy.

"When you sleep under a starry sky, take your child with you, and lay him down beside you. Let him look at the starry sky. Don't explain the names of the planets, or how you understand their origin or destiny, for you yourself don't know that, and the dogma in your brain will only lead the child away from the truth. His subconscious knows the truth, and it will move into his conscious mind itself. You can only tell him that you like to look at the shining stars, and you can ask your child which star he likes best of all.

"Generally speaking, it is very important to know how to

ask your child questions. The next year, you must offer your child his own planting bed and prepare it, giving him the chance to do everything in it he wants to. In no case should you force him to do something in it or correct what he has done. You can only ask him what he wants. You can help him out only after asking his permission to work with him. When you sow cereals, let him throw the grains on the bed with his own little hand."

"All right," I commented to Anastasia with suspicion. "Maybe this way the child will develop an interest in the plant world and may become a good farmer, but where is he going to get knowledge in other spheres?"

"What do you mean 'where'? The main thing is not just that he will know and feel what grows and how but that he will start to think and analyze and that the cells in his brain that will be working his entire life will wake up. They are what make him smarter and more talented than those in whom those cells are asleep.

"As for your being, what you call progress, it might be unsurpassed in any sphere, but the purity of his intentions will make him happiest of all. The contact he makes with his planets will allow him to receive more and more new information continuously and to exchange information. All this will be taken in by his subconscious and transferred to his conscious mind in the form of more and more

new thoughts and discoveries. Outwardly he will be an ordinary person, but inwardly . . . You call people like that geniuses."

## FOREST SCHOOL

"Tell me, Anastasia, is this exactly how your parents raised you?"

She answered me after a brief pause, during which she was probably recalling her childhood. Then Anastasia sat down on the grass, stroked it with the palms of her hands and began.

"I barely remember my papa and mama in the flesh at all. I was raised by my grandfather and great-grandfather more or less the way I was just telling you, but the point is that I myself had a good feel for nature and the animal world around me, maybe without being fully aware of its entire purpose—but that's not the main thing when you have that feel.

"I continued to live in this glade without my papa and mama, but I wasn't alone.

"Around me in the grass there were lots of bugs and beetles of all kinds. I would put out my hand to them, they would jump and crawl over them, and I would examine them and think about why they were all so different. So they would be fun for me to play with or for some other reason?



"I liked the larger beasts, too. I had an interesting time with them, especially when I learned not just to walk but to run, too.

"I made friends with a wolf cub, a she-bear, and a fox. They were my friends, but sometimes we fought.

"I very much wanted to understand their language and thoughts because I wanted to understand why none of them would let me leave the glade.

"When none of the bigger beasts were nearby, I often wanted to leave the glade and go into the taiga to look around at what was going on there.

"But the moment I went any farther, one of them would always block my path. And growl at me.

"One time the she-bear even slapped me with its paw. I was so angry I decided never to look in its direction.

"It followed me around for an entire day, but I kept turning away. Then it let up a piteous wail. I felt sorry for it. I went and stroked it, and it began to lick my hand and feet joyously.

"That was when I realized that beasts talk with the intonations of their sounds and gestures, and I began to observe them closely and study their language.

"Subsequently, I realized they weren't letting me stray from the glade because that was the territory of other beasts that didn't know me the way everything in my

home space did.

"From time to time, my grandfather and great-grandfather would come to the glade to visit and talk with me. They often asked me questions they wanted me to answer.

"Among us, the older generation treats a baby and a small child like a divinity, and through the child's answers verifies its own purity."

I began asking Anastasia to recall some specific question and its answer. She smiled and told me this story.

"One day I was playing with a snake. I turned around and my grandfather and great-grandfather were standing next to me, smiling. This made me very happy right away because they were interesting to be with. Only they could ask me questions, and their hearts beat in the same rhythm as mine. It's different in animals.

"I ran up to them. My great-grandfather leaned over to me, and my grandfather took me in his lap. I listened to his heart beat and combed through and examined the hairs in his beard. We were all silent. Thinking. And I felt so good deep down, so calm and joyful. Then my grandfather asked me, 'Anastasia, tell me why I have hair growing here'—and he pointed to his head and beard—'and not here?'— and he pointed to his forehead and nose.

"I touched his forehead and nose, but no answer came. I

cannot speak rashly, I have to understand for myself.

"When they came the next time, my grandfather said again, 'I still keep wondering why I have hair here and not here.' And once again he pointed to his forehead and nose.

"My great-grandfather watched me closely and seriously. Then I thought maybe this really was a serious problem for him, and I asked, 'Grandfather, would you like it very much if it grew everywhere? On your forehead and nose, too?'

"My great-grandfather pondered this, but my grandfather replied, 'No, I wouldn't.'

"So that's why it doesn't, because you don't want it to,' I told my grandfather.

"He seemed to be reflecting on this himself, stroking his beard.

"You mean it grows here because I want it to?'

"Of course, grandfather, you do, and I do, and so does whoever thought you up.'

"At this my great-grandfather asked me, rather excitedly, 'And who, who thought him up?'

"The one who thought up everything,' I replied.

"But where is he? Can you show me?' my great-grandfather asked, leaning over toward me.

"I couldn't answer him immediately, but this question

stayed inside me, and I began thinking about it often."

"And you answered later?" I asked.

"Yes, about a year later, and I was given new questions. And until I answered them, my grandfathers wouldn't ask me new ones, which caused me much suffering."

## ATTENTION TO MAN

I asked Anastasia who taught her to speak, if she barely remembered her mother and father and rarely saw her grandfather and great-grandfather. The answers I received astonished me and require interpretation by specialists, so I will try to reproduce them as fully as I can. For me their meaning started coming clear only gradually. First, after my question, she clarified.

"Do you mean the ability to speak in the languages of different people?"

"What do you mean 'different'? Are you saying you can speak different languages?"

"Yes," Anastasia replied.

"German, French, English, Japanese, Chinese?"

"If an interesting person shows up and you wish to pay him close attention, you can quickly learn to communicate in the language he's comfortable with. For instance, right now I'm speaking in your language."

"You mean Russian."

"In your Russian I try to speak using the same idioms and words you use in your speech. That was a little bit hard for me at first, since you have a small vocabulary and

repetitive turns of phrase. Your emotions are weakly expressed, too. In that kind of language it's hard to set forth everything I'd like to precisely enough."

"Wait a minute, Anastasia. I'm going to ask you something in a foreign language and you answer me."

I said "hello" in English, then French. She immediately answered me, greeting me in gestures rather than words.

Unfortunately, I don't speak any foreign languages. I studied German in school but got only fair grades. In German I did remember a whole sentence that my schoolmates and I learned well. I said it to Anastasia.

"Ich liebe dich, und gib mir deine Hand."

She held her hand out to me and answered in German, "I give you my hand."

She blushed, held out her hand to me, and whispered, "You said something very nice to me, Vladimir."

She understood me no matter what language I spoke.

Stunned by what I'd heard and still not believing my ears, I asked, "Are you saying that each person can be taught all languages?" I sensed intuitively that there had to be some simple explanation for this unusual phenomenon, and I wanted to understand it. "Anastasia, why don't you tell me in my language and try to give me examples, so that I can understand," I asked, a little agitated.

"Fine, fine, only calm down. Relax, or you won't understand. But first I will teach you to write in Russian."

"I know how to write. Tell me about learning foreign languages."

"Not just write, I'll teach you to be a writer, a talented writer. You will write a book."

"That's impossible."

"Not impossible! Simple."

Anastasia picked up a stick and drew in the earth the entire Russian alphabet and all the marks of punctuation and asked me how many letters there were there.

"Thirty-three," I answered.

"There, you see? Not many letters at all. Could you call what I've drawn a book?"

"No," I answered. "This is the ordinary alphabet and that's all. The ordinary letters."

"But after all, every Russian-language book consists of these ordinary letters," Anastasia remarked. "Do you agree with that? Do you understand how simple it all is?"

"Yes, but in books they're set out differently."

"That's right. All books consist of many combinations of these letters, and man sets them out automatically, guided by his emotions. This implies that first to be born is not the combination of letters and sounds but the feelings drawn by his imagination."

"The person who is going to read it has approximately the same feelings, and they are remembered for a long time. Can you remember any images or situations from the books you've read?"

"Yes," I said after thinking a moment.

For some reason I remembered Lermontov's *Hero of Our Time*, and I started telling Anastasia about it. She interrupted me.

"There, you see? You can draw the book's heroes and tell me what they felt, and quite a lot of time has passed since you read it. But if I had asked you to tell me what order the thirty-three letters were set out in and how their combinations were arranged, would you have been able to reproduce that?"

"No. That's impossible. I don't remember the entire text word for word."

"That really is very hard. So the feelings of one person were conveyed to another person with the help of every possible combination of those thirty-three letters. You looked at these combinations and immediately forgot them, but you retained the feelings and images for a long time. This means that if emotions are linked directly to these signs, if there is no thought of all the various conventions, the soul forces these signs to appear in a certain order, alternating combinations of them so that the reader



will subsequently feel the writer's soul. And if the writer's soul has—"

"Wait a minute, Anastasia. You have to tell me more understandably, more concretely. Show me through some example about learning languages. Who taught you this?"

"My great-grandfather," Anastasia replied.

"Tell me using an example."

"He used to play with me."

"How did he play? Tell me."

"You have to calm down, relax. I just can't understand why you're so agitated."

She continued calmly.

"My great-grandfather used to play with me, as if he were joking. When he would visit me alone, without my grandfather, he would always walk up, bow at the waist, and hold out his hand, and I would hold out mine. First he would squeeze my hand, then he would get down on one knee, kiss my hand, and say, 'Hello, Anastasia.'

"One day, he came and did everything the same as always, and his eyes looked at me tenderly, as always, but his lips said something incomprehensible. I looked at him in surprise, and once again he said something else and completely incoherent. I couldn't stand it and asked, 'Grandpapa, have you forgotten what word to say?'

"'Yes,' my great-grandfather replied.

"Then my great-grandfather took a few steps away from me, thought about something, and walked up to me again, held out his hand to me, and I mine to him. He got down on his knee and kissed my hand. A tender look, and his lips were moving, but he wasn't saying anything at all. I actually got scared. Then I prompted him.

""Hello, Anastasia. Those are the words you've always said, grandpapa."

"'Correct,' my great-grandfather confirmed, and he smiled.

"And I realized this was a game, and he and I played like that often. First it was easy, then the game got more and more complicated, but also more interesting. I tried to observe my great-grandfather's face very carefully and remember which words corresponded to the expressions of his eyes, the wrinkles on his forehead, the movement of his lips, and his barely noticeable gestures. It began when I was three and ended when I was eleven—when man takes a kind of exam that consists of closely watching the person he's talking to and being able to understand him without words, no matter what language he is using.

"That kind of dialog is much more perfect than speech, and also faster and fuller. You call this telepathy. You consider it unusual, something out of science fiction, but it simply involves an attentive attitude toward the person, a

developed imagination, and a good memory. Behind it lies not simply a more perfect means of exchanging information but also knowledge of the human soul, the plant and animal world, the universe—everything, basically."

"This may all be true, but I thought you could speak any language. You just sense the person's thoughts, though, and then not immediately but after you've interacted with him for a certain time."

"Yes, that's true, Vladimir, but afterward you can remember all the words that correspond to his thoughts, no matter what language these words are spoken in. Also through this game you can learn to understand the desires of animals and birds."

## FLYING SAUCER? NOTHING SPECIAL

Then I asked her to show me an example of her knowledge in the field of technology.

"You want me to tell you how various mechanisms from your world work?"

"Tell me something our greatest scientists have just barely touched on. Make some great scientific discovery."

"That's exactly what I've been doing for you this whole time."

"Not for me, for the scientific world, so that they recognize it as a discovery. Make a discovery to be proved in the area of technology, spaceships, the atom, or fuel, since you say it's all so simple."

"Compared with what I'm trying to explain to you, these spheres are, oh, how can I tell it in your way, for comparison, they're the Stone Age or something."

"That's just wonderful. You think it's primitive; on the other hand, it will be understandable. You're going to prove you're right and confirm that your intellect is above mine. Tell me, for instance, our airplanes and spaceships, do you consider them perfected mechanisms?"

"No. They're quite primitive. They're confirmation of the

primitiveness of the technocratic path of development."

This answer put me on my guard, since I realized that either she truly knew incomparably more than the ordinary mind could imagine or else her opinions were those of a madman. I kept trying to elicit an answer.

"What makes our rockets and planes primitive?"

Anastasia answered me after a brief pause, as if she were trying to understand what I'd said.

"The movement of all your mechanisms, absolutely all of them, is based on combustion. Not knowing more perfect, natural sources, you utilize something primitive and unwieldy with incredible stubbornness. You aren't even stopped by the ruinous consequences of its use. Your airplanes and rockets have simply laughable duration of flight, and they only rise a little bit above the Earth, relative to the Universe, and meanwhile this method has nearly reached its upper limit. But that's silly! A combustible or flammable substance pushes this unwieldy construction, what you call a spaceship. At the same time, the larger part of this ship is designed to 'solve' precisely the problem of thrust."

"What other principle of movement in the air could there be?"

"For example, like in a flying saucer," Anastasia replied.

"What? You know about flying saucers and the prin-

ciples of their movement?"

"Of course I do. It's very simple and rational."

My throat actually dried up and I tried to hurry her along.

"Tell me, Anastasia, quickly and understandably."

"Fine, only don't get upset. If you're upset this will be harder for you to grasp. The principle of a flying saucer's movement is based on the energy of vacuum production."

"How's that? Make yourself clearer."

"You have a poor vocabulary, but for this to be understandable to you I must use only that."

"I'll add to it right now," I blurted, agitated: "bank, roof, tablet, air ..." and I started quickly listing all the words that came to mind at that moment. I even cursed.

Anastasia interrupted me.

"Stop, I know all the words you could use to express yourself, but there are others, too, and a whole other way of conveying information. Using it I could explain to you in a minute what might otherwise take a couple of hours. That's a lot, and I'd like to tell you about something more important."

"No, Anastasia. Tell me about the saucer, the principle of its movement, and its energy sources. Until I understand I won't hear anything else."

"Fine," she continued. "Combustion is when a solid sub-

stance is quickly transformed under a specific influence into a gaseous one, or when in the course of some reaction two gaseous substances turn into lighter ones. Everyone understands this, of course."

"Yes," I replied, "if you light gunpowder, it turns into smoke, and gasoline turns into a gas."

"Yes, more or less. But if you or all of you had purer intentions and, hence, knowledge of nature's mechanisms, you would have realized long ago that if there is a substance that can expand significantly and explode, shifting to another state, then there has to be the opposite process. In nature, these are the living microorganisms that transform gaseous substances into solids. In general, all plants do this, only with varying speed and degree of solidity and firmness of what is created. Look around you. They drink the earth's sap and breathe the air and from this produce a solid and firm body—wood, say, or, even more solid and firm, a nutshell, or a pit, like a plum has. Invisible to the eye, the microorganism does this at very great speed, seemingly feeding only on air. These microorganisms are the flying saucer's engines. They resemble the brain's microcellule, only with a very narrow function. They have just one function: movement. But they perform it perfectly and can push the apparatus to one-nineteenth of the speed of thought of Earth's present-day average statistical

person. They are on the inside of the upper part of the flying saucer, between its double walls, which are about three centimeters apart. The upper and lower surface of the outer walls is porous, with micro-holes. Through these little holes the microorganisms suck in air, thereby creating a vacuum in front of the saucer. The streams of air begin to solidify even before they touch the saucer, and when they pass through the microorganisms they turn into little balls. Then these little balls increase in size, to about half a centimeter in diameter, soften, and slip between the walls to the lower part of the saucer and once again disintegrate into a gaseous substance. You can eat them if you manage to before they fall apart.

"But what are the flying saucer's walls made of?"

"They're grown."

"How's that?"

"Why are you so surprised? Think about it. Lots of people grow a fungus, in various vessels, and the fungus makes water into which they mix it something tasty and a little sour. This fungus takes on the form of the vessel it's in. This fungus, by the way, looks a lot like a flying saucer. It makes double walls, too. If to its water you add one more microorganism, solidification occurs, but this so-called microorganism can be produced or, rather, spawned, by efforts of the brain, or will, a vivid imagina-



tion."

"Can you do that?"

"Yes, only my efforts alone wouldn't be enough. It requires the effect of a few dozen people possessing the same abilities, and it has to be done over the course of a year."

"But is there everything necessary here on Earth to make—or spawn, as you put it—this flying saucer and these microorganisms?"

"Of course there is. The Earth has everything the Universe does."

"But how are the microorganisms placed inside the saucer's walls if they're so small you can't see them?"

"When the upper wall is spawned, it itself attracts them and collects them in huge quantities, the way hives attract bees. But here, too, efforts of will are required from several dozen people. What's the point of detailing all this any further, though, if you still won't be able to spawn it due to your lack right now of people with the appropriate will, intellect, and knowledge?"

"You really can't help in any way?"

"I can."

"Then do it"

"I already have."

"What have you done?" I didn't understand.

"I told you how to raise children. And I'll tell you more. You'll tell other people. Many will understand this and their children, raised in this way, will possess the intellect, knowledge, and will that will allow them to make not only a primitive flying saucer but significantly more as well."

"Anastasia, how do you know all this about the flying saucer? Is it really through communicating with plants?"

"They landed here, and I, well, I sort of helped them repair it."

"Are they a lot smarter than us?"

"Not at all. They're immeasurably far behind man. They're afraid of him and don't come close to people, although they're very curious. At first they were afraid of me. They aimed thought-paralyzers at me. They huffed and puffed. They were trying to frighten and astonish me. I had a hard time calming them down and being nice to them."

"How could they not be smarter if they can do what man still can't?"

"What's surprising about that? Bees make incredible constructions out of natural materials with an entire heating and ventilation system, but that doesn't mean they're above man in intellect. There is no one and nothing in the Universe more powerful than man except God."

## THE BRAIN IS A SUPERCOMPUTER

The possibility of creating a flying saucer intrigued me. If you consider just its principle of movement as a hypothesis, then it is new. A flying saucer, though, is a complex mechanism and for us Earthlings not an item of first necessity.

Therefore I felt like hearing something that would be immediately understood. A "something" that would not require any investigations by scientific minds but could be applied in practice in our life immediately and bring benefit to all people. I began asking Anastasia to give me a solution to some acute problem our society faces today. She agreed, but asked, "You'll first have to formulate it, this problem. How can I solve it without knowing what you want?"

I began to think of what was most relevant today, and the following parameters of the problem came to my mind.

"You know, Anastasia, in our big cities we face a very acute pollution problem today. The air there is so bad, it's hard to breathe."

"You're the ones polluting it."

"Certainly, we are. Listen some more, only don't philosophize about how we need to be cleaner, have more trees, and so on. Take everything just the way it is today, and come up with something. Well, for instance, something to make the air in the big cities fifty percent cleaner but so that it requires no money from the treasury, no state money, I mean. And so that what you come up with is the most rational of all possible options and could be implemented instantly and be understandable to me and everyone else."

"I'll try immediately," Anastasia replied. "Have you listed all the parameters?"

Just in case, I tried to make the problem even more complicated. What if her intellect and capabilities really did prove to be much higher than our reason's conceptions allowed for? Therefore I added, "Whatever you come up with should also yield a profit."

"For whom?"

"Me, and the country, too. You live in Russia, that means all of Russia."

"By this you mean money?"

"Yes."

"And a lot?"

"Anastasia, there can never be too much profit, that is to say, money. But I need enough to pay for this expedition

and cover another, while Russia ..."

I thought a little. What if Anastasia did have an interest in our civilization's material goods?

I asked, "You don't want anything for yourself?"

"I have everything," she replied.

All of a sudden I had an idea, and I realized how I could interest her.

"You know, Anastasia, let what you come up with yield enough money so that all your beloved summer people, the gardeners, all over Russia, can obtain seeds for free or on advantageous terms."

"That's wonderful!" Anastasia exclaimed. "You've thought of something fine. I'll work on this right away, if that's all you have. I like this so much! Seeds. . . . Or do you have something else?"

"No, Anastasia, that's enough for now."

I could tell the task itself had inspired her, especially the free seeds for her summer people. But at the time I was still certain that even given her abilities the problem of clean air simply did not have a solution, otherwise our many scientific institutes would have found it already.

Anastasia lay down on the grass vigorously, not calmly as usual, and flung her arms out to either side. Her curved fingers faced fingertips up and would move and then be still, and the lashes of her closed eyes would flutter from

time to time.

She lay there like that for about twenty minutes and then opened her eyes, sat up, and said, "I've determined it. But what a nightmare."

"What did you determine? What's the nightmare?"

"The greatest harm is inflicted on you by your cars. You have so many of them in the big cities, and each one emits a nasty smell and substances that harm the organism. What is most terrible is that those substances mingle with and permeate particles of dirt and dust. Traffic raises this permeated dust, and people breathe in this horrible mixture. It flies in all directions and comes to rest on the grass and trees and covers everything everywhere. This is very bad. Very harmful for the health of people and plants."

"Of course it's bad. But everyone knows that. Only no one can do anything. There are cleaning machines, but they aren't up to the task. Anastasia, you've discovered absolutely nothing new. You haven't come up with an original solution to cleaning the pollution."

"I've only just determined the main source of the harm. Now I'll analyze and think. I need to concentrate for a long time, maybe even an hour, because I've never studied these kinds of problems before. I don't want you to be bored, so go take a walk through the forest."

"You go ahead and think and I'll find something to keep

me busy."

Anastasia turned completely inward. After an hour's walk through the forest, I found her dissatisfied, it seemed to me, and I said, "You see, Anastasia, here even your brain is powerless. Only don't get upset. We have many scientific institutions working on this problem, but, like you, they've only established the fact of pollution. So far they haven't been able to do anything either."

She replied in a somewhat apologetic tone.

"I've sorted through all the possible options, I think, but to do this quickly and by fifty percent—I couldn't do that."

I went on the alert: she had found some solution after all.

"What percentage did you come up with?" I asked.

She sighed.

"I fell short by a lot. I came up with . . . thirty-five to forty percent."

"What?" I couldn't keep from exclaiming.

"Not so great, right?" Anastasia asked.

My throat went dry. I felt that she couldn't lie and exaggerate or minimize what she said. Trying to restrain my excitement, I said, "Let's change the conditions of the problem. Let it be for thirty-eight percent. Tell me quickly what you came up with."

"All those cars have to collect all that nasty dust, not

just throw it up."

"How can that be done? Tell me quickly!"

"Up in front, oh, what do you call the part that sticks out there?"

"The bumper," I helped her.

"Right, the bumper. Inside or under it you need to make a box with holes in its top part, and there should also be little holes behind, for the air to get out. When these cars move the streams of harmful dusty air will fall into the front holes, be cleaned, and the air going out the back holes will be twenty percent cleaner."

"But where is your forty percent?"

"Right now this dust is hardly picked up off the street. But with this method there would be much less of it, so it could be cleaned up every day and everywhere. I calculated that in a month, with these little boxes, assuming they were installed on all cars, the quantity of dirty dust would decrease by forty percent. After that the percentage of pollution wouldn't decrease because other factors come into play."

"What is the size of the box, what should be in it, and how many holes should it have and at what spacing?"

"Vladimir, would you like me to attach it to each car, too?"

For the first time I saw she had a sense of humor, and I



laughed out loud, picturing Anastasia bolting her boxes to cars. She started laughing, too, delighted at my merri-ment, and she spun around the glade.

The idea really was simple; the rest was just a technical matter. Already, without Anastasia, I could picture how all this might work: decrees from administration heads, auto inspectorate monitoring, changing filters at gas stations, turning in old ones, vouchers, and so on. A straightforward solution, like seatbelts.

One stroke of the pen and there were seatbelts in every car. And here, one stroke of the pen and the air would be cleaner. And entrepreneurs would fight for orders for the boxes, and there would be work for factories, and most of all, the air would be cleaner as a result.

"Wait a minute." I turned again to Anastasia, who was spinning in her merry dance.

"What should be in these boxes?"

"In these boxes ... in these boxes ... Why don't you think about it a little? It's very simple," she answered without stopping.

"But where will the money come from for me and for the summer people, enough for their seeds?" I asked my question again.

She stopped.

"What do you mean where? You asked that the idea be

the most rational. Here I thought one up, the most rational one. It's going to be used in big cities all over Russia and they'll pay Russia enough for this idea to pay for free seeds and for you. Only you can obtain one for yourself only under certain conditions."

At the time I paid no attention to what she was saying about certain conditions and began trying to clarify something else.

"So you mean it has to be patented? Who would pay voluntarily?"

"Why wouldn't they? They will, and I'll set a percentage right now. From the boxes produced, Russia would get two percent and you one hundredth of a percent."

"What's the use of your percentage? In some things you're strong, but in business you're a total neophyte. No one is going to pay voluntarily. They don't always pay even when there are signed contracts. If only you knew how many accounts receivable we had. The arbitration courts are overloaded. Do you know what an arbitration court is?"

"I can guess. But in this case they'll pay punctiliously. Anyone who refuses will go bust. Only the honest ones will flourish."

"Why should they go bust? Are you going to turn into an enforcer or something?"

"What won't you think of. My goodness. They themselves, or rather, circumstances will take shape around the cheats in such a way that they go bust."

Right then I had a thought. If you considered that Anastasia couldn't lie and, as she herself said, natural mechanisms wouldn't allow her to be wrong, that meant before making these statements she must have worked out in her mind an unprecedented quantity of information and made tremendous arithmetic calculations, while bearing in mind the huge number of psychological factors of the people who would be involved in her project. In our language, she not only solved the very difficult problem of cleaning the air but also composed and analyzed a business plan—and all this in about an hour and a half. I decided to clarify a few details.

"Tell me, Anastasia, did you do the calculations in your mind, using the percentage of clean air, the amount of money that would come from the production of your boxes installed on cars, from filter replacements, and so on?"

"Calculations were done, and very detailed ones, only not using my brain."

"Stop! Quiet. Let me finish my thought. Tell me, could you compete with the most advanced computer, say, a Japanese or American one?"

"But I'm not interested in that," she replied. "That seems

so primitive and demeaning. Competing with a computer is like . . . oh, how can I explain it to you using a clear example? It's like vying with a prosthetic arm or leg, and not even a full prosthesis but part of one. A computer lacks the main thing. And the main thing is feelings."

I began trying to prove the opposite, telling her how among us people who are considered highly intelligent and respected in society play chess with a computer. But when neither this nor other arguments convinced her, I asked her to do this for me and for other people as proof of the possibilities of the human brain. She agreed, and then I clarified.

"You mean I can officially announce your readiness to compete with a Japanese supercomputer in solving problems?"

"Why Japanese?" Anastasia asked.

"Because they're considered the best in the world."

"Is that so? Why don't I do it with all of them at once, so you don't ask me to do this boring thing again later."

"Marvelous!" I rejoiced. "Do it with all of them, only formulate a problem."

"Fine," Anastasia agreed reluctantly. "But for starters, so I don't waste time on formulating one, let them solve the same problem you set for me and confirm or refute my solution. If they refute it, then they have to suggest their

own. Life and people will judge us."

"Marvelous, Anastasia! Great idea! This is constructive. And how much time do you think it will take for them to provide a solution to this problem? I don't think the hour and a half you took would be enough. Let's give them three months."

"All right, three."

"I suggest letting anyone who wants to be a judge. If there are a lot of them, then no one will try to influence their opinion out of greed."

"So be it, but I'd like to talk some more with you about raising children."

Anastasia considered childrearing the main thing and always spoke about this with pleasure. My fancy of competing with computers aroused no particular interest in her. However, I was still happy to have obtained her consent. Now I wanted to call on firms that put out modern computers to join the competition to solve the problem set out above.

I decided to clarify something with Anastasia.

"What prize should be named for the winner?"

"I don't need anything!" she replied.

"Why are you talking about yourself? Are you so sure of your victory?"

"Naturally, I'm a human being."

"Well, fine. What might you offer anyway to a firm that took first place after you?"

"Well, I could suggest how to improve their primitive computer."

"It's a deal!"

**"... IN HIM WAS LIFE; AND THE LIFE  
WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN ..."**

**— *Gospel of John***

One day, at my request, Anastasia took me to see the ringing cedar her grandfather and great-grandfather had spoken of. We had not gone far from the glade when I saw it. The forty-meter tree loomed over those nearby, but its main distinction was that its crown seemed to shine, creating a halo like the ones they draw on icons around the faces of saints. The halo was not even; it pulsed. At its acme a fine ray formed and receded into the heavens' infinity.

The spectacle bewitched and enchanted me.

At Anastasia's suggestion I pressed my palm to its trunk and felt a ringing—or a crackling comparable to what you might hear under a high-voltage power line, only more resonant.

"I was the one who happened to find a way to return this energy to the Cosmos and then scatter it on Earth," Anastasia informed me. "See, the bark is torn in various places. That was the she-bear climbing. I had a hard time

making it carry me to the lowest branches. I clung to the fur at its nape. It was climbing and bellowing, climbing and bellowing. That's how I got to the lowest branches, and I climbed the rest to the very top. I sat there for two days and you can't imagine the things I thought of. I stroked it, and I shouted upward, but nothing helped.

"My grandfather and great-grandfather arrived. You can imagine what happened then. They stood below, keeping watch over me and demanding I climb down. I, in turn, was demanding they tell me what to do with the cedar. How to save the ringing cedar, since people hadn't sawed it down. They wouldn't say. But I sensed they knew. My grandfather—he's a sly one—wanted to trick me and started promising to help me settle things with a certain woman I just couldn't find a way to contact.

"I very much wanted to help her. Before that my grandfather had just been angry at me for spending so much time on her and not doing other things. But I knew he couldn't help me because my great-grandfather had tried twice, unbeknownst to my grandfather, and hadn't been able to either.

"Then my grandfather became totally distraught. He grabbed a branch and ran around the cedar, lashing the air with the branch and shouting that I was the most muddle-headed person in the family, I was acting alogically, I



wasn't taking intelligent advice, and he was going to teach me with a switch on my rear end. And all the while he was lashing the air with the branch. What a thing for him to do! Even my great-grandfather started laughing. So did I. Right then a branch broke off by accident at the top and a glow came from it. I heard my great-grandfather's voice, very serious, demanding and imploring simultaneously.

"Don't touch it, dear granddaughter, don't do anything more, come down very carefully, you've already done everything."

"I obeyed and climbed down. My great-grandfather embraced me without saying a word. He himself was trembling and pointing at the cedar. On it, more and more branches were beginning to glow, and then a ray formed and shone upward. Now the ringing cedar won't burn. Through its ray it will give everything it has stored up for five hundred years to people and the Earth. My great-grandfather explained that the ray formed right where I'd shouted up and accidentally broken the branch when I was laughing. My great-grandfather said that if I'd touched the ray emanating from the broken branch, my brain would have burst, since there was too much energy and information in that ray, and that that was exactly how my papa and mama had died."

Anastasia placed her palms on the mighty trunk of the

ringing cedar she had saved, pressed her cheek to it, was silent for a while, and then went on with her story.

"They, my dear papa and mama, had discovered a ringing cedar like this. Only my mama did things a little differently because she didn't know. She climbed a tree next to the ringing cedar, reached to the lowest branch of the ringing cedar, and broke it off, accidentally illuminating herself with the ray that blazed out of the twig. The twig was pointed down and the ray went into the ground. This is very bad, very harmful, when that kind of energy falls into the earth. When my papa came along he saw the ray and mama, who had been left hanging there, one hand with a death grip on the branch of the ordinary cedar. In the other she held the broken branch of the ringing cedar.

"My papa must have understood everything. He climbed the ringing cedar, climbed to the top. My grandfather and great-grandfather saw him break off the top branches, but they didn't glow, while the lower ones began glowing more and more. My great-grandfather said that my papa realized that a little more and he would never be able to climb down, but the ray shining up, the pulsing glow, still had not appeared, there were just more and more fine rays shining down. The upper ray appeared when my papa broke a large branch aimed upward. And although it didn't shine, he bent it and aimed it at himself.

"When it blazed up, my papa was still able to unclench his hands, and the ray from the straightened out branch shot into the sky and then formed a pulsing halo.

"My great-grandfather said that in the last instant of his life my papa's brain absorbed a huge stream of energy and information, that in some incredible way he was able to cleanse himself of all the information stored there before, and so he was able to play for time so that he could unclench his hands and direct the branch upward before the explosion."

Anastasia stroked the cedar with her palms one more time, pressed her cheek to it, and stood still, smiling, listening to the ringing of the tree.

"Anastasia, is the oil of the cedar nut stronger or weaker in its healing properties than pieces of the ringing cedar?"

"The same. If the nuts are gathered at a specific time and with a specific attitude toward the cedar. Then the cedar itself produces it."

"Do you know how to do that?"

"Yes, I do."

"Will you tell me?"

"Yes, all right."

## **YOU NEED TO CHANGE YOUR WORLD-VIEW**

I asked Anastasia what kind of woman it was she'd had her conflict with her grandfather over, why she couldn't find a way to contact her, and why she needed that contact.

"You have to understand," Anastasia began her story, "it's very important when two people join their lives together that they have a spiritual attraction. Unfortunately, it all mainly begins with the flesh. For example, you see a beautiful young woman and want to be intimate with her. You still haven't seen the person, her soul. Often people join their fates solely on the basis of fleshly attraction. That quickly passes and switches over to something else. What binds people together then?

"It's not all that hard to find someone close to you in spirit with whom you can acquire genuine happiness, but in your technocratic world there are so many obstacles. The woman I've been trying to contact lives in a big city and travels regularly to the same place, probably her job. There or along the way she is constantly finding or encountering a person very close to her in spirit with whom she could be truly happy, but most importantly they would

have a child capable of bringing the world much good. Because they would have created him in the same impulse as we did. But this man simply cannot get up the nerve to declare himself to this woman, and she herself is partly to blame. Imagine, he looks in her face and sees his soul's chosen one, while she, as soon as she senses anyone's gaze, immediately tightens her belt and pulls her skirt up a little higher and tries to lift it "accidentally." Well, and so on. This man immediately gets carnal feelings, but he doesn't know her, so he goes to see a woman he knows better, who is more accessible to him, attracted by these same carnal feelings.

"I want to tell this woman what to do, but I can't get through to her. Her mind won't open up to receive information for a second. She works wholeheartedly only on problems of daily life. Imagine, one time I followed her for an entire day. It was awful! Later my grandfather warned me that I was working very little with my summer people, spreading myself thin and prying in other people's territory.

"She wakes up in the morning and her very first thought is not to rejoice at the coming day but what to cook. She gets upset that she's out of some kind of food, then she gets upset that she's out of something you use to rub on yourself in the morning, either a cream or paint. She is

constantly thinking about how to get it. She is constantly late and forever running, hoping that first one, then another means of transport doesn't leave without her.

"At the place she always goes to, her brain is generally overloaded—how can I explain it to you?—well, with all kinds of nonsense, to my mind. On the one hand, outwardly her brain is supposed to make her facial expression practical and perform some work assignment of hers. At the same time she's thinking about a girlfriend or acquaintance of hers and fuming at her. Simultaneously she is listening to what the people around her are saying. And imagine, it's like this day in and day out, day in and day out, like a wind-up toy.

"On her way home, when people see her she pretends to be an almost happy woman. But in fact she is constantly thinking about problems and paints, examining the clothing in stores, especially the kind that reveal her tempting charms, assuming this will bring about some miracle, although in her case the opposite happens. She comes home and starts to clean her house. She thinks she's relaxing when she's watching her television and fussing with food, and the main thing is for her to think about something good for a single second. Even when she goes to bed, everyday cares fill her thoughts.

"If she had just torn herself away from them for a minute

that day and thought about—"

"Wait a minute, Anastasia. You have to explain how you see her, what she looks like, her clothing, and what she should be thinking about at the moment this man is near her. What should she do so he will try to declare his intentions to her?"

Anastasia told me everything in the minutest detail. I will quote here what I think is the crux.

"A dress slightly below the knees, green, no cleavage, with a small white collar, almost no makeup, she listens with interest to the person conversing with her."

"And that's it," I commented after hearing this simple explanation.

To which Anastasia remarked, "There's a lot behind these simple things. For her to choose just this dress, to use makeup differently, and to look at someone with genuine interest she would have to change her world-view."

## MORTAL SIN

"I also have to tell you about the conditions under which you will get the money out of the bank when there is a lot in your accounts, Vladimir."

"Tell me, Anastasia. This is a pleasant procedure."

But what I heard blew my mind. Judge for yourself.

"In order for you to take the money out of your bank account, you will have to observe the following conditions. First of all, you cannot use alcohol for three days before you withdraw the money. When you arrive at the bank, the bank's senior officer will have to use the instruments you have to verify that you have met this condition in the presence of at least two witnesses. If this first condition is met, then you can move to implementation of the second. You will have to bow at least nine times to the bank's officer and the two witnesses."

When her sense, or rather, nonsense, reached me, I jumped up and she rose as well. I could not believe my ears and asked for clarification.

"First they're going to check me for alcohol, and then I have to bow to the witnesses at least nine times in addition. Is that right?"



"Yes," Anastasia replied. "For each bow they can give you a sum of no more than a million of your rubles at today's value."

Rage, fury, and irritation, filled me.

"Why did you say this? Why? I was feeling so good. I believed you. I was starting to think you were right about a lot of things, that there was a logic to your conclusions. But you ... Now I'm absolutely certain you're not quite right. You negated it all with your last statement. There's no sense or logic to it, and it's not just me, any normal person would tell you the same. Maybe you want me to set out these conditions in your book, too?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's completely abnormal. Are you going to write your instruction to the banks or issue a decree?"

"No. They'll read them in the book, and each one will deal with you this way. Otherwise they face ruin."

"Oh my God! And I've been listening to this creature for more than two days? Maybe you'd like the bank officer to bow to the witnesses with me?"

"It would be good for him as well as you. This would bring great benefit, but I have not set conditions as strict for them as for you."

"You mean, you've only shown this favor to me? Can you even imagine what a laughingstock you've made of me?"

Here's what the love of an abnormal hermit can turn into!

"Only none of this is going to work. No bank will agree to serve me under these conditions, no matter how much you model your situations. Look how your dreams have gotten away from you. You can bow here in the taiga all you like."

"The banks will agree and open the accounts even without your knowledge—true, only those banks that want to work honestly. People will trust them and come to them," Anastasia continued to insist.

Irritation and rage were building up in me more and more. I was angry at myself and at Anastasia.

That's all I needed. I'd listened to her so much, tried so hard to understand what she said, and she was basically half-crazy. I started expressing myself to Anastasia in crude terms, to put it mildly.

She stood there, leaning back against the tree, her head bowed slightly forward. One of her hands was pressed to her chest, and the other was raised up, waving slightly.

I recognized this gesture. She repeated it each time she was calming the environment, so I wouldn't be afraid, and this time I realized why she was trying to calm it.

It was as if every offensive or harsh word addressed to Anastasia lashed her and made her body shudder.

I fell silent. I sat back down on the grass, turned away

from Anastasia, and decided I was going to calm myself now and go to the riverbank. I wasn't going to talk to her at all anymore, but when I heard her voice behind me I was amazed that there was no insult or reproach in its tone.

"You have to understand, Vladimir, man brings on himself everything bad that is happening to man when he violates the rules of spiritual existence and breaks his connection with nature.

"The dark forces are trying to distract him with the up-to-the-minute attractiveness of your technocratic existence and force him not to think about the simple truths and commandments already set forth in the Bible. And they are frequently successful.

"One of man's mortal sins is pride. Most people are subject to it, this sin. I'm not going to expound for you right now on the tremendous perniciousness of this sin. Once you've returned and decided to sort things out, you'll understand this yourself or with the help of the enlightened people who will come to see you, but for now I will just say that the forces of darkness, as the opposition to the forces of light, are seeing to it every second that man retains this sin, and money serves them in this as one of their main instruments. They are the ones who thought it up.

"Money is like a high-tension zone.

"The forces of darkness are proud of their invention. They even believe they are stronger than the forces of light because of inventing money. And they use it to distract man from his true purpose.

"This great confrontation has been going on for millennia, and man is at its center. But I don't want you to be subject to this sin.

"I realize I won't get by here on explanations alone. Over the millennia humanity has not understood the explanations or comprehended the method for countering this sin. It's natural you wouldn't be able to either.

"But I very much wanted to rid you of this mortal danger, this corruption of the spirit. I thought up a situation especially for you in which this mechanism of the dark forces would falter, break down, or even work in reverse—to the eradication of sin. That's why they became so enraged.

"Their rage settled in you and you started shouting insulting words at me. They wanted me to get angry at you, but I would never do that. I realized that what I had thought up had hit its mark, and it's now clear to me that their mechanisms, which have been functioning faultlessly for millennia, can be broken. So far I've done this just for you, but I'll come up with something for the oth-

ers, too.

"What is so awful about you drinking that intoxicating poison less and not being arrogant and obstinate? What were you so indignant about? Naturally, it was pride that had come into play in you."

She fell silent, and I thought, "It's incredible, but her mind, or something else there, is investing so much deep meaning into this comic, absolutely irregular situation, this bowing at a bank, and there might actually be some logic to it. I really should sort this out more calmly."

Any anger at Anastasia passed, and a sense of vague guilt arose instead, but I would not apologize then and only turned to face her, desiring reconciliation. Anastasia seemed to sense my inner state, and she immediately roused herself joyfully and quickly began talking.

## TOUGHING PARADISE

"Your brain is weary of trying to comprehend me, but I still have much I'd like to say, and I'd like to, but you need to rest. Let's sit down again for a little while."

We sat down on the grass. Anastasia took me by the shoulders and drew me toward her. The back of my head touched her breast, feeling a pleasant warmth.

"Don't be afraid of me. Relax," she said quietly, and she lay down on the grass so that I could rest more comfortably. She lowered her fingers into my hair, as if combing it, and with the fingertips of her other hand quickly touched first my forehead and then my temples. Sometimes she lightly pricked various spots on my head with her nails. All this gave me a sensation of tranquility and enlightenedness. Then, placing her hands on my shoulders, Anastasia said, "Please listen to what sounds are around you now."

I listened, and my ear caught many differences in tonality, rhythm, and duration of sound.

I started listing them out loud: birds singing in the trees, insects chirring and clicking in the grass, trees rustling, and bird wings clapping and making noise. After listing everything I was hearing, I fell silent, continuing to listen

closely, and I found this pleasant and very interesting.

"You didn't name them all," Anastasia remarked.

"Yes, I did," I replied. "Well, I might have missed something not very significant or inaudible to me—something unimportant, that is."

"Vladimir, can you really not hear my heart beating?" Anastasia asked.

Indeed, how could I not have noticed that sound? The sound of her heart beating.

"Yes," I quickly told her, "of course I hear it. I hear it very well. It's beating evenly and calmly."

"Try to remember the intervals of the sounds you're hearing. To do that, choose the main ones and remember them."

I chose an insect's chirring, a crow's cawing, and water gurgling and splashing in the stream.

"Now I'll speed up the beating of my heart, and you listen to what happens around you."

Anastasia's heartbeat quickened and, in its wake, so did the rhythms of the sounds I could hear around me, and their tonality rose.

"Astonishing! This is simply incredible!" I exclaimed. "Do you mean they are reacting so keenly to the rhythm of your heartbeat, Anastasia?"

"Yes. All, absolutely all of them: the little blade of grass,

the big tree, the bugs. They're responding to the change in my heart's rhythm. The trees are speeding up their internal processes and are starting to manufacture more oxygen."

"Do all the plants and animals around people react like that?" I asked.

"No. In your world they don't understand who to react to, and you don't try to make contact with them, don't understand the purpose of this contact, and don't give them sufficient information about yourselves.

"Something like this might happen with the plants and people who work in their own small gardens, if the people do everything the way I've already told you—saturating the seeds with information about themselves and communicating with the plants more consciously. Do you want me to show you what sensation a person who has this kind of contact would feel?"

"Of course I do, but how will you manage that?"

"I'll match the rhythm of my heartbeat to yours, and you'll feel it."

She slipped her hand under my shirt. Her warm palm pressed lightly on my chest, and her heart, gradually adjusting, began beating in the same rhythm as mine.

Something amazing happened. An extraordinarily pleasant sensation arose, as if next to me were loving relatives



and my mama. A softening and health appeared in my body, and in my soul a joy, a freedom, and what felt like a new understanding of the universe.

The range of sounds around me caressed me and told me the truth they knew, which I still did not fully understand but only intuited.

All the joyful and mellow feelings I had ever experienced in my life seemed to merge into a single beautiful sensation. This may be what most call happiness.

But as soon as Anastasia began to alter the rhythm of her own heartbeat, the wonderful sensation began to dissipate. I asked, "More! More, please, Anastasia."

"I can't do that for too long. After all, I have my own rhythm."

"Well, just a little more," I asked.

Once again Anastasia briefly returned to me the sensation of happiness. Then it all dissipated, leaving me nonetheless a particle of the pleasant and shining sensation in the form of a memory.

We were silent for a while. Then I once felt like hearing Anastasia's voice again, so I asked, "Was that how good it was for the first people, Adam and Eve? Lie down, revel, flourish. It's all here. Only it would get boring if there was nothing to do."

Instead of answering, Anastasia asked me a question.

"Tell me, Vladimir, do many people think like that about the first man, Adam, the way you just did?"

"Most, probably. What was there for them to do, in paradise? It was later that man began to develop and dream up all kinds of things. Labor developed man. He became smarter, too, thanks to labor."

"You do have to labor, but the first man was immeasurably smarter than today's, and his labor was more significant and demanded great intellect, consciousness, and will."

"So what did Adam do in paradise? Cultivate a garden? If so, now every gardener can do that, to say nothing of horticulturalists. The Bible says nothing more about Adam's activities."

"If the Bible were to set it all out in detail, it would take more than a whole human life to finish reading. The Bible has to be understood. There is a tremendous amount of information behind each of its lines. You want to know what Adam did? I'll tell you. But first remember, the Bible says that God ordered Adam to give each creature living on Earth a name and a purpose. And he—Adam—did just that. He did something all the scientific institutions in the whole world put together have still not achieved."

"Anastasia, do you yourself turn to God and ask Him for anything for yourself?"

"What could I ask for when I've been given so much? I have to thank Him and help Him."

## WHO RAISES OUR SON?

On the way to the river, as Anastasia was accompanying me to my boat, we sat down to rest at the spot where she had left her outer clothing.

"Anastasia, how will we raise our son?"

"Try to grasp this, Vladimir. You are still unable to raise him, and when his eyes look at the world consciously for the first time, you should not be by his side."

I grabbed her by the shoulders and shook her.

"What are you saying? What are you presuming? I don't understand where you come up with these unique conclusions. The very fact of your existence is unlikely, but all this doesn't give you the right to decide everything yourself, in violation of all the laws of logic."

"Please calm yourself, Vladimir. I don't know what logic you have in mind, but try to make sense of everything calmly."

"What do I have to make sense of? The child isn't just yours. He's mine, too, and I want him to have a father. I want him to have everything and the chance to get an education."

"You have to understand, he doesn't need material

goods as you understand them. He'll have everything from the very beginning. In his infancy, he will receive and comprehend so much information that studying—again, as you understand it—would simply be silly. It would be like sending a great mathematician to study in first grade.

"You will want to bring the baby some pointless toy, but he absolutely doesn't need it.

"You need it for your own satisfaction: 'What a good and concerned person I am!' If you think you're creating good by providing your son with a car or something else you consider worthwhile, but if he wants something, he'll be able to obtain it himself.

"Think calmly, Vladimir. What concrete and important thing could you tell your son? What could you teach him? What have you done in life that would interest him?"

She continued speaking in a gentle, calm voice, but her words made me tremble.

"You have to understand, Vladimir. When he starts making sense of the universe, you will seem like an underdeveloped being next to him. Do you really want this? Do you really want your son to see his father as a muddle-head?

"The only thing that can bring you closer is the degree of purity of intentions, but this purity is attainable to very few in your world. You must try to achieve it."

I realized it was utterly useless to argue with her, and I cried out in despair, "You mean he will never know about me?"

"I will tell him about you and your world when he is capable of understanding it all consciously and of making decisions. What he'll do, I don't know."

Despair, pain, insult, and a terrible conjecture were roiling inside me. I felt like striking this beautiful intellectual hermit's face with all my might.

I understood everything, and I gasped for air at what I had understood.

"I understand everything! Everything! You ... you had no one to sleep with here in order to conceive a child. You were posing from the very beginning, you manipulative . . . making yourself out to be a nun!

"You needed a child. You went to Moscow. You sold your nice mushrooms and berries. You should have hustled there, taken off your jacket and kerchief. They would have snapped you up right away, and you wouldn't have woven your web and entangled me. Of course! You needed a man dreaming of a son. And you got what you were after.

"Were you thinking about a child? A son? Who was fore-ordained to lived as a hermit? To live the way you believe he should? And to think she was expounding the truth! You're taking on a lot, hermit. What are you, the ultimate

truth? Did you ever give me a moment's thought?

"Yes! I was dreaming of a son! Dreaming of passing my business on to him, teaching him business. I wanted to love him. How am I supposed to live now? Live and know that your tiny son is crawling around in the remote taiga somewhere defenseless—without a future, without a father. Yes, this breaks my heart. You wouldn't understand that, you forest bitch."

"Maybe your heart will become sensible and everything will be fine? That kind of pain will cleanse the soul, quicken the thought, call you to create." Anastasia spoke softly.

But fury was storming inside me, the kind of rage that . . . I lost control. I grabbed a stick. I ran away from Anastasia and started beating the stick against a small tree with all my might until the stick broke.

Then I turned toward a standing Anastasia and, as soon as I saw her, incredibly, my rage began to subside. I thought, "Why did I lose control of myself again and fly into a rage?"

As she had the last time I'd cursed her, Anastasia stood there, pressed to a tree, her arm raised and her head bowed, as if she were withstanding a hurricane-force wind.

No longer angry at all, I approached her and began ex-

amining her. Now her arms were pressed to her chest, her body was trembling lightly, and she was silent. Only her good, always good eyes were watching me tenderly. We stood there like that for a while, examining each other. I thought, "Without a doubt, she is incapable of telling a lie."

She didn't have to tell me all this, after all, but she did.

She knew it would be bad for her, but she said it. Of course, this was an extreme, too. You couldn't survive speaking only the truth all the time, only what you thought. But what was to be done if she was like that and could not be different?

Everything came to pass just as it did. What happened, happened. Now she was going to be the mother of my son.

She was going to be a mother, as she said.

Of course, she would be a strange mother. Her way of life . . . her thinking . . . But there was nothing to be done for it.

On the other hand, she was very strong physically. And good. She knew nature and animals well. And she was smart, although her intellect was unique.

Still, she knew a lot about raising children. All the time she so wanted to talk about children. She would nurse our son. A woman like that would nurse him. She would get



him through the hard frosts and blizzards. They were nothing to her. She would nurse him and raise him.

I had to adapt to the situation somehow. I would visit them in the summer, as if it were my dacha. In winter, that would be impossible. I couldn't take it. But in the summer I would play with my son. He would grow up and I would tell him about the people in the big cities. But right now I did have to apologize to her.

"Forgive me, Anastasia. My nerves got the better of me again."

She began speaking immediately.

"It's not your fault. Just don't curse yourself. Don't be upset. You were concerned about your son. You were upset that he would have a bad time of it. That your son's mother was like an ordinary bitch and didn't know how to love with a real, human love. Just don't worry, Vladimir. Don't get upset. You said that because you didn't know, you didn't know anything about my love, my beloved."

## ACROSS A SPAN OF TIME

"Anastasia, if you're so intelligent and omnipotent, does that mean you might help me, too?"

She looked up at the sky and back at me.

"There is no creature in the entire Universe capable of developing more powerfully than man or of having more freedom. All other civilizations bow down before man. All the various civilizations can develop and improve in only one direction, and they aren't free. They can't even begin to understand man's greatness. God—the Great Reason—created man and gave no one more than him."

I couldn't understand—or, rather, immediately comprehend—what she said. Again, I asked the same question, asking about help without myself understanding the specific help I wanted.

She asked, "What do you have in mind? For me to heal all your physical ailments? That's easy for me. I did that six months ago, only no benefit was gained in the main thing, and what is pernicious and dark in people of your world did not diminish in you. Your little aches and pains will try to come back.

"Witch! Crazy hermit lady! I need to get out of here as

fast I can'—that's what you were thinking right now, am I right?"

"Yes," I replied, surprised. "That's exactly what I was thinking. Are you reading my mind?"

"I guess what you might think. It's written all over your face. Tell me, Vladimir, do you really not . . . well, remember me even a little?"

Her question surprised me greatly, and I started examining the features of her face more closely. Her eyes—I really did start to think I might have seen them somewhere. But where?

"Anastasia, you yourself said you've lived in the forest all this time. How could I have seen you?"

She smiled and ran away.

After a while Anastasia emerged from the bushes wearing her long skirt and brown buttoned top, with her hair gathered up under her kerchief, but without the jacket she'd been wearing on the shore when we met. The kerchief was tied a little differently. The clothing she wore was clean but unfashionable. The kerchief covered her forehead and neck. And I remembered her.

## AN ODD YOUNG WOMAN

Last year, the caravan's ship had tied up at a village not far from these parts. We'd had to buy meat for the restaurant and were detained on shore for a while.

Sixty kilometers away began a dangerous stretch of the river that would not allow the ship to move at night (the navigational lights weren't operating on some stretches of the river). So as not to waste this time, we started making announcements over our outside loudspeaker and the local radio about an upcoming evening of entertainment on the ship.

The white ship at the shore twinkling with so many lights and the music pouring from it always attracted the local youth. This time, too, nearly the entire young population of the village lined up for the gangway.

First, like everyone who steps on deck for the first time, they rushed to go around and see everything. After crossing the main, middle, and upper decks, they ultimately clustered in the bar and restaurant.

The female half, as a rule, danced, and the male half tended to drink. The unusual situation on the ship plus the music and alcohol always put them in an excited state

that sometimes caused the crew quite a bit of trouble. Almost always they didn't have enough time and a collective request would begin to extend their pleasure for just a half-hour, then more and more.

That time I found myself alone in my cabin, and I heard the music coming from the restaurant. I was trying to re-adjust the caravan's upcoming itinerary. All of a sudden I felt someone staring at me. I turned around and saw her eyes through my window.

There was nothing surprising in that. Visitors were always interested in looking into the cabins on the ship. I stood up and opened the window. She didn't go away. Embarrassed, she kept looking at me.

I felt like doing something for this woman standing all alone on the deck. I thought, "Why isn't she dancing like the others? Might she have known some misfortune?"

I offered to show her the ship and she nodded in silence. I led her around the ship and showed her the office, whose elegant furnishings always amazed visitors: the rug covering the floor, the soft leather furniture, the computers. Then I invited her to my cabin, which consisted of a bedroom-cum-office and a sitting room decorated with rugs and magnificent furniture, a television, and a video player. At the time, it probably gave me pleasure to impress this intimidated village girl with the achievements of civilized

daily life.

Thinking I would completely wow her with my chic, I opened a box of candies for her, poured two goblets of champagne, and turned on a video of Vika Tsyganova singing "Love and Death." There were other songs as well on the cassette, performed by my favorite singers. She took the barest of sips of champagne, watched me closely, and asked, "It's been very hard, hasn't it?"

I'd expected all sorts of things, only not that question.

The journey had indeed been hard. We'd had difficulty navigating the river, and the crew of sailors, cadets from the river institute, were smoking grass and pilfering the store.

We were often behind schedule and couldn't get to the settlements where announcements had been made about the caravan's arrival by the scheduled time. The burden of these and other cares often gave me no chance to admire the riverbank landscape or simply get a good night's sleep.

I said something absurd to her, like, "It's all right. We'll get through," turned toward the window, and drank my champagne.

She and I talked about something else, listened to the video, and talked until the ship docked at the shore at the end of our pleasure cruise. Then I saw her to the gangway.

Returning to my cabin, I noted to myself that there was something odd and unusual in that woman, and I was left with a light and bright feeling after being with her. That night, for the first time in many days, I got a good night's sleep. Now I realized that the woman on the ship was Anastasia.

"So that was you, Anastasia?"

"Yes. There, in your cabin, and I memorized all the songs I sang for you in the forest. They were playing while we were talking. Do you see how simple it all is?"

"How did you come to be on the ship?"

"I was interested in how all this happens with you, how you live. After all, Vladimir, I've always dealt only with summer people. That day I ran to the village, sold the dried mushrooms the squirrels had gathered, and bought a ticket for your pleasure cruise. Now I know a lot about the category of people you call entrepreneurs, and now I know you well.

"I am very, very guilty before you. I didn't know it would work out this way, that I would change your destiny so greatly. Only there's nothing I can do, since *they* determined to carry out this plan and *they* are subject only to God. Now you and your family will have to overcome great hardships and adversities for a while, and then it will all pass."

While still not understanding what specifically Anastasia was talking about, I sensed intuitively that something was being revealed to me that went beyond the usual notions of our existence and that this something would affect me directly.

I asked Anastasia to tell me in greater detail what she meant talking about the changes in my destiny and the hardships. Listening to her, I could not have guessed how precisely what she predicted would come to pass in real life. In her story, Anastasia once again took me back to the events of the year before.

"Then, on the ship, you showed me everything, even your cabin, you treated me to candies, offered me champagne, and then escorted me to the gangway, but I didn't leave right away. I stood on shore near some bushes, and through the bar's shining windows I could see the local youth dancing and having fun there.

"You'd shown me everything but hadn't taken me to the bar. I guessed why. I was dressed inappropriately. I was wrapped up in a kerchief, my top was unfashionable, and my skirt was very long. But I could have taken off the kerchief. My top was neat and clean, and I had smoothed my skirt with my hands carefully on my way to see you."

I actually hadn't taken Anastasia to the bar that evening because of her rather odd clothing, under which, as had



now become clear, this young woman was concealing extraordinary beauty that made her stand out sharply next to anyone else. I said, "Anastasia, why did you need that bar? Would you have danced there in your galoshes? And how would you have known the dances of today's youth?"

"I wasn't wearing galoshes then. When I exchanged the mushrooms for money to buy a ticket to your ship, I borrowed shoes from that woman, old shoes, it's true, and they were tight on me, but I cleaned them with grass. And dancing . . . I just need one little peek, that's all. And how I can dance."

"Did I insult you?"

"No. Only if you'd gone to the bar with me, I don't know whether this is good or bad, but events might have developed differently, and such a thing would probably not have occurred. But now I don't regret that what happened happened."

"So what happened? What so terrible happened?"

"After you saw me off you didn't return to your cabin right away. First you stopped in to see the captain, and the two of you headed for the bar. For you, this was an ordinary event. When you walked in, you immediately made an impression on the crowd. The captain was wearing his uniform, tightly belted. You were the famous Megre, altogether elegant and outwardly respectable, well known to

many on shore—the owner of a caravan that was unusual for people around these parts. You realized full well that you were making an impression on the people around you.

"You sat down at a table with three young women from the village. They were all of eighteen and had just graduated from high school. They immediately brought your table champagne, candies, and new wineglasses that were better and handsomer than the ones that had been there before.

"You took one of the girls by the hand, leaned toward her, and started saying something into her ear, and I realized this was what's called 'compliments.' Then you danced with her a few times, talking the whole time. The girls' eyes were shining. It was as if she were in another, fairytale world.

"You took her out on deck and showed the girl the ship, as you had me, brought her to your cabin, and treated her to the same things as you had me, champagne and candies. You behaved a little differently with the young woman than you had with me. You were cheerful. With me you were serious and even sad, but with her you were cheerful. I could see this well through the shining windows of your cabin, and maybe then I wished a little I could be in that girl's place."

"You're saying you were jealous, Anastasia?"

"I don't know. It was an unfamiliar emotion for me."

I recalled that evening and those young village girls trying so hard to look older and more modern.

In the morning the ship's captain and I laughed again at their nocturnal escapade. At the time, in the cabin, I realized the girl was in such a state that she was prepared for anything. But I had no thought of taking her. I told Anastasia this, to which she replied, "You still took her heart. You went out on deck, there was a fine rain, and you threw your jacket over the girl's shoulders and then brought her back to the bar."

"Do you mean to say, Anastasia, you were standing in the bushes, in the rain, the whole time?"

"That's all right. It was a fine rain, gentle. It just hampered my view. And I didn't want my skirt and kerchief to get wet. They were my mama's. I inherited them from my mama. But I was very lucky. I found a cellophane bag on shore. I took them off, put them in the bag, and hid them under my top."

"Anastasia, if you hadn't gone home and it had started to rain, you could have come back to the ship."

"No, I couldn't. You'd seen me off and you had other concerns. It was all winding up anyway."

"When the time came for the evening to end and the

ship was supposed to leave, at the girls' request, and mainly at the request of the girl who had been with you, you held the ship back. Everything was in your power then, including their hearts, and you were drunk on that power. The local youth were grateful to the girls, who also felt endowed with power through you. They had forgotten all about the young men who were in the same bar and with whom they had been friends since school.

"You and the captain escorted them to the gangway. You went back to your cabin. The captain went up on the bridge, and the ship blew its whistle and slowly, very slowly, began casting off. The girl you had danced with stood on shore among her girlfriends and the local boys seeing the ship off. Her little heart was beating so hard, it was as if it were trying to burst from her chest and fly away, and her thoughts and feelings were confused.

"Behind her were the black outlines of the village houses with their extinguished lights, and in front of her the white ship was pulling away from shore forever, its many lights burning, generously pouring music over the water and the nighttime shore. You were on that departing white ship, you, who had said all those beautiful words she had never heard before, bewitching and tempting words. And all this was moving away from her, slowly and forever.

"Then she got her nerve up and in front of everyone . . .

The young woman made a fist and shouted desperately, 'I love you, Vladimir!' Then again and again. Did you hear those cries?"

"Yes."

"It was impossible not to hear them, and the men from your crew heard them, too. Some of them came out on deck and laughed at the young woman."

"I didn't want them to laugh at the girl. After a while, as if realizing something, they stopped laughing."

"But you didn't come out on deck, and the ship kept moving slowly away. She thought you couldn't hear her, and she kept shouting, persistently, 'I love you, Vladimir!' Then her girlfriends started helping her, and they shouted together. I was curious to know what this feeling was, love, that made man lose control of himself, or maybe I wanted to help the young woman, and I shouted along with them. 'I love you, Vladimir!'

"At that moment, I actually forgot that I can't just say words, that they have to have feelings behind them, a consciousness and authenticity of natural information. Now I know how strong that feeling is. And not all that subject to reason, either.

"That village girl started pining away and drinking, and I had a hard time helping her. Now she's married and immersed in daily cares. And I've had to add to my own and

her love."

The story of the young woman disturbed me a little. Anastasia's story resurrected in detail my memory of that evening. Everything truly had happened as she said. It was real.

Anastasia's unique declaration of love made no impression on me then. Now that I'd seen her way of life and become familiar with her world-view, she'd begun to seem rather unreal, even though she was sitting beside me and I could easily reach out and touch her. My awareness, accustomed to using other criteria for evaluation, did not perceive her as an existing reality. If at the beginning of our encounter I'd been drawn to her, now she no longer evoked the former emotions.

"You mean to say you consider the appearance of these new feelings in you coincidental?"

"They're desired and important," Anastasia replied. "They're even pleasant, but I wanted you to love me the same way. I realized that when you knew me and my world a little more closely, you wouldn't be able to perceive me as an ordinary person, you might even be afraid sometimes. And that is what happened. I'm the one to blame. I made many mistakes. For some reason I was agitated the whole time. I rushed and didn't manage to explain. It all ended up rather foolishly, didn't it? Am I right? Do I need

to reform?"

At these words, she gave the merest sad smile, touched her own chest, and I was immediately reminded of the event of that morning, when I had been with Anastasia.

## BUGS

That morning, I had decided to perform Anastasia's morning routine with her. At first everything was going fine. I stood under the tree and touched different shoots. She told me about the herbs, and then I lay down beside her on the grass. We were completely naked, but even I wasn't cold, perhaps, of course, because she and I had been running through the forest together. A magnificent mood, I felt a kind of lightness, and not just physical, it seemed to be inside me. It all started when I felt a tingling on my thigh. I raised my head and saw bugs of some kind, ants and, I think, beetles, on my thigh and leg. I gave a swipe to slap them, but missed.

Anastasia grabbed my hand and held it. "Don't touch them," she said.

Then she knelt before me, bowed, and pressed my second hand to the ground. I lay there as if crucified. I tried to free my hands, but nothing doing. It felt impossible. Then I gave a jerk, exerting quite a bit of effort. She restrained me without especially tensing, even smiling all the while. On my body, I felt more and more crawling, prickling, biting, and tingling bugs and I concluded they



were starting to eat me up. I was in her hands literally and figuratively, and I assessed the situation. No one knew where I was. No one was going to wander in here. And if they did, they would see my gnawed bones, if they saw any bones at all. All sorts of things flashed through my brain then, and on the basis of all that, probably, my instinct for self-preservation suggested the sole possible solution. With all my strength and desperation I bit Anastasia's bared breast and at the same time shook my head from side to side. I unclenched my teeth as soon as she cried out. Anastasia let me go, jumped up, held her breast with one hand, and waved upward with the other, trying to smile. I jumped up, too, and shouted at her, feverishly shaking the crawlers off me.

"You wanted to feed me to those vipers, you forest witch, and I won't give in so easily!"

Still waving and trying with all her might to smile to everything standing guard all around, Anastasia looked at me and walked slowly to her lake, not at her usual run, her head lowered. I stood there a little longer, trying to figure out what to do now. Return to the river? But how would I find my way? Follow Anastasia? But why? Nonetheless I went to the lake.

Anastasia was sitting on the shore rubbing some herb in her palms and squeezing its juice on her breast where you

could see the huge bruise from my bite. It must have hurt. But what was her purpose in holding me down? For a while I shifted from foot to foot in silence, and then I asked, "Does it hurt?"

Without turning her head, she replied, "It hurts my feelings more." Silently, she continued to squeeze the herb juice.

"Why did you think to play a joke like that on me?"

"I wanted what was best. The pores of your skin are all plugged up. They don't breathe at all. The little bugs would have cleaned them out. It's not that painful, it actually feels good."

"And the snake, it was poking its tongue in my foot?"

"It wasn't going to do anything bad to you. And if it had released poison, then that would only have been on top, and I would have wiped it away immediately. The skin and muscles on your heel are numb."

"That's from an accident," I said.

We were silent for a while. It was a foolish situation. Not knowing what to say, I asked, "How come someone, that invisible someone, didn't help you like before, when I fainted?"

"He didn't help because I was smiling. And when you started biting, I tried to smile."

I felt a little awkward. I snatched up a tuft of grass lying

next to me, rubbed it in my palms with all my strength, and then knelt before her and started rubbing her bruise with my wet palms.

## DREAMS ARE THE CREATION OF THE FUTURE

Now that I had learned about Anastasia's feelings and her desire to prove that she was a natural and ordinary person, no matter how very unusual she was, I realized the pain I had inflicted on her soul that morning. I apologized to her again, and Anastasia replied that she wasn't angry, but now, after what I'd done, she was afraid for me.

"How could you have done something so terrible?" I asked, and once more I heard a story that someone wishing to seem as normal as all the people living in our world should not lay out in earnest. Because no one says this about himself.

"When the ship left," Anastasia continued, "and the local youth headed for the village, I stood on the bank for a while alone, and I felt good. Then I ran into my forest. The day passed as usual, but in the evening, when the stars came out, I lay down on the grass and began to daydream, and that was when I came up with this plan."

"What plan is that?"

"You have to understand that what I know is known in part by various people of the world you live in, and taken together they know almost everything, only they don't un-

derstand the mechanism completely.

"That was when I dreamed you would go to a big city and tell many people about me and about what I've explained to you. You would do this using the same methods you usually use to convey all kinds of information there, and you would write a book. Lots and lots of people would read it and the truth would be revealed to them. They would start being sick less, change their attitude toward children, and develop a new method of teaching for them.

"People would love more and the Earth would emit more light energy. Artists would draw my portrait, and that would be the best they had ever drawn. I would try to inspire them. They would make what you call a movie, and it would be the most beautiful movie ever. You would look at all this and think of me.

"Scientists would come to see you who would understand and appreciate what I'd told you about, and they would explain a lot to you. You would believe them more than me, and you would understand that I'm no witch but a person, it's just that there is more information inside me than others.

"What you wrote would arouse great interest, and you would be rich. You would have money in the banks of nineteen countries, and you would make a pilgrimage to holy places and cleanse yourself of all the darkness inside

you.

"You would think of me and love me, and you would want to see me and your son again. You would want to be worthy of your son.

"My dream was very vivid, but also possibly a little selfish.

"That is probably why all this happened. *They* took it as a plan of action and decided to move people across the dark forces' span of time. That could happen if the detailed plan were born on Earth, in the soul and thoughts of an earthly man. *They* probably perceived the plan as grandiose, and they themselves might have added something to it, so the dark forces powerfully set their work in motion. Nothing like this has ever happened before. I realized this from the ringing cedar. Its ray has become much thicker. And it's ringing even more powerfully now—it's in a hurry to give off its light and energy."

I listened to Anastasia, and at that moment the thought that she was not normal gained an even greater foothold in me. Maybe she had escaped a long time ago from some hospital and was living here, in the forest, but I had also slept with her. Now a child might be born. Quite a story. Nevertheless, seeing how serious and agitated she was as she spoke, I tried to calm her.

"Don't worry, Anastasia. Your plan is obviously unfeas-

ible, so there's no reason for the forces of darkness and light to struggle. You don't know enough detail about our ordinary life, its laws and conventions. The problem is that we publish a great many books these days, but people don't buy even the works of famous writers very much. I'm no writer. I don't have the talent, abilities, or education to write anything there."

"Yes, Vladimir. You didn't have them before, but now you do," Anastasia stated in reply.

"Fine," I continued to try to reassure her. "Even if I do try, no one is going to publish it or believe in your existence."

"But I do exist. I exist for those I exist for. They will believe and help you just as I will help them later. And together with those people we will . . ."

The meaning of her sentence was not clear to me right away, and once again I tried to reassure her.

"I'm not even going to try to write anything. There's no point. Eventually you'll have to understand that."

"You will. *They* have clearly composed an entire system of circumstances that will compel you to do it."

"What, you think I'm a pawn in someone's hands?"

"And a lot depends on you. But the dark forces will try to prevent you using every means at their disposal, up to and including pushing you toward suicide and creating the il-

lusion of despair."

"That's it, Anastasia. I've had enough listening to your fantasies."

"You think these are fantasies?"

"Yes! Yes! Fantasies." And I stopped myself short.

A thought relating to time blazed up in my mind, and I understood. Everything Anastasia had been telling me about her dreams were things she had thought last year, when I still didn't know her as well as I did now and hadn't slept with her. Now, a year later, it had come to pass.

"So you mean everything's already happening?" I asked her.

"Naturally. If it hadn't been for *them*, and a little for me, your second expedition would have been impossible. After all, you were barely making ends meet after the first one, and you no longer had any rights to the ship."

"You mean you influenced the shipping company, the firms that helped me?"

"Yes."

"Then you ruined me and harmed them. What right do you have to interfere? On top of that, I left the ship and I'm sitting here with you. They could be stealing me blind. You must know how to hypnotize. No, something even worse. You're a witch, full stop. Or a crazy hermit. You have nothing, not even a home, and you're philosophizing



here in front of me, you sorceress.

"I'm an entrepreneur! Do you have any idea what that is? I'm an entrepreneur! I may perish, but my ships are still on the river, bringing people goods. I'm the one supplying them, giving people the goods they need, and I could for you, too. And what can you give me?"

"Me? What can I give you? I can give you a drop of heavenly kindness and peace. You will be a clear-eyed genius. I am your image."

"Image? And who needs it, your image? What good comes of that?"

"It could help you write your book for people."

"Oh, please! Again with your mysticism!"

"I never do anything bad to anyone. I couldn't. I'm a human being! If you're so concerned about earthly goods and money, then wait a little longer, and it will all come back to you."

"I'm guilty before you for dreaming so and because you're going to have a hard time for a while, but somehow nothing else came to mind then. You don't see the logic. You have to be compelled by the circumstances of your world."

"Oh, please." I couldn't restrain myself. "You mean you're still going to try to force me? You're doing this, but you still want to appear an ordinary human being."

"I am a human being. A woman!" Anastasia was agitated, as was evident from the way she exclaimed, "I have only wanted what is good and light. I want you to be cleansed. That's why I came up with the idea then of a pilgrimage to holy places and a book. They accepted it, and the dark forces are always struggling with them, but they never win on the main thing."

"Are you telling me that with your intellect, information, and energy you're going to stand on the sidelines as an observer?"

"Given the degree of conflict between the two great principles, the effect from my efforts is insignificantly small. Help is needed from many others from your world. I'm going to search for them and find them, the way I did when you were in the hospital. Only you have to get a little more conscious yourself, too. Fight what is indecent in yourself."

"What is so awful about me, what bad thing did I do in the hospital? And how did you heal me if you weren't there?"

"At the time you simply didn't sense my presence, but I was by your side. When I was on the ship, I brought you the branch from the ringing cedar that my mama had broken off before she died. I left it in your cabin when you invited me there. You were already sick then. I could tell."

Do you remember the branch?"

"Yes," I replied. "The branch really did hang in my cabin for a long time. Many of the crew saw it. I took it to Novosibirsk. But I didn't lend it any significance."

"You just threw it out."

"I didn't know."

"That's right. You didn't know. You threw it out. And my mama's branch didn't have time to vanquish your disease. Then you lay in the hospital. When you get back, take a close look at your case history. You'll see on the chart that although they used the very best medicine, there was no improvement. But later they brought you cedar nut oil. The doctor, who followed medical protocols strictly, shouldn't have done it, but he did what does not exist in a single one of your medical prescription manuals and has actually never been done at all. Do you remember?"

"Yes."

"You were treated by the woman who is in charge of one of the best clinics in your city. But her department has no connection with your ailment. She kept you there, even though one floor up in the same building was the department for your ailment. Right?"

"Yes!"

"She stuck needles in you, turning on music in the half-dark room while she was doing it."

Anastasia was saying everything that had in fact happened to me.

"Do you remember that woman?"

"Yes. She was in charge of the former provincial party hospital."

All of a sudden Anastasia, looking at me seriously, said a few snatches of sentences that struck me immediately and even sent a shiver through my body. "What kind of music do you like? . . . Good. . . . Like this? It's not too loud? " She said those sentences in the voice and intonation of the doctor who had treated me.

"Anastasia!" I exclaimed.

She interrupted me.

"Keep listening, for God's sake, and don't be so surprised. Please try, try at last to understand what I'm telling you. Rouse your intellect just a little. All this so far is very simple for man."

She continued.

"This woman doctor, she is very good. She is a real doctor. I got along easily with her. She is good and open. It was I who didn't want you moved to a different department. The other was profiled for your ailment and hers wasn't. But she said to her superiors, 'Leave him here and I'll heal him.' She sensed she could. She knew your ailments were merely a consequence of 'the other.' And she

tried to fight that 'other.' She was a doctor.

"And how did you behave? You continued to smoke, drank whatever you wanted, ate spicy and salty food, and all this despite a bad ulcer. You denied yourself nothing, no pleasures whatsoever. Somewhere in your subconscious it set in, though you yourself have no suspicion, that you're not afraid of anything and nothing will happen to you. I did nothing good. The opposite, more than likely. The darkness in your consciousness did not diminish, but consciousness and will did not increase either. When you were well, you sent your employee to wish her, the woman who saved your life, a happy holiday, and you yourself never called her even once. She was waiting for that, she loved you like . . ."

"She or you, Anastasia?"

"We, if that's more understandable to you."

I stood up and, not knowing why, took a couple of steps away from Anastasia, who was sitting on a fallen tree. A mixture of feelings and thoughts had given rise to increasing vagueness in my attitude toward her.

"Once again you don't understand how I can do this. You're frightened. But it's easy to guess that I do it with my imagination and by accurately analyzing all the possible situations. And once again, you thought I—"

She fell silent and bowed her head over her knees. I

stood in silence and thought, "Why does she keep saying all these unbelievable things? She says them and gets upset that they're incomprehensible. Evidently she doesn't understand that no normal person could accept them, and consequently her, as normal."

Then I did walk up to Anastasia and brushed aside the lock of hair that had fallen on her face. Tears slipped from Anastasia's big, gray-blue eyes. She smiled and said something unlike her: "What a woman, right? Right now you're amazed by the very fact of my existence and can't believe your eyes. You don't believe completely and can't grasp what I'm telling you. The fact of my existence and my abilities seem astonishing to you. You've completely ceased to perceive me as a normal human being, and believe me, Vladimir, I'm a human being and no witch.

"You consider my way of life astonishing, but why doesn't the other seem astonishing and paradoxical? Why do people, who deem the Earth a cosmic body, the greatest creation of the Supreme Reason, each process of which is His greatest achievement, torment and put such effort into damaging it? A man-made spaceship or airplane seems natural to you, but that entire piece of equipment is made from the broken and smelted parts of the greatest living natural mechanism.

"Imagine a being who smashes up a flying airplane to

make himself a hammer or scraper from the parts and is proud if his primitive tool works out. That being doesn't understand that you can't go on smashing an airplane indefinitely. How can you not understand that you can't torment our Earth like that?

"The computer is considered a triumph of reason, but few suspect that a computer is like a brain prosthesis. Can you imagine what would happen to a person if he used crutches while having normal legs? The muscles of his legs would atrophy, of course. A machine can never surpass a human brain that's constantly in training."

Anastasia wiped away the tear slipping down her cheek with the palm of her hand and once again continued persistently to set forth her incredible conclusions.

At the time, I could not have guessed that everything she said would excite many people and rouse scientists' minds and even as a hypothesis would have no analog in the world.

According to Anastasia, the Sun is something like a mirror. It reflects the emanation, invisible to the eye, that comes from the Earth. This emanation comes from people who are in a state of love, joy, and certain other emotions of light. Reflected off the Sun, they return to Earth in the form of sunlight and give life to everything earthly.

She cited a number of arguments, although they were

not that easy to understand.

"If the Earth and the other planets used only the grace of the Sun's light," she said, "the Sun would go out, burn unevenly, and its illumination would not be uniform. There is no unilateral process in the Universe, nor could there be. Everything is interrelated."

She also took words from the Bible: "And the life was the light of men."

Anastasia also said that feelings were transmitted from one person to another by reflecting off cosmic bodies. She demonstrated this with an example.

"None one living on Earth can deny that he can feel when someone loves him. This feeling is more palpable when you're next to the person who loves you. You call this intuition. In fact, invisible waves of light emanate from the person who loves you. But even when that person is not nearby, if his love is strong, it is also palpable. With the help of this feeling, by understanding its nature, you can work miracles. This is what you call miracles, mysticism, or incredible abilities. Tell me, Vladimir, did you just feel a little better with me? Lighter, warmer, fuller?"

"Yes," I replied. "For some reason I felt warmer."

"Now look what happens to you when I focus even more on you."



Anastasia lowered her eyelashes slightly, slowly took a few steps back, and stopped. A pleasant warmth flooded my body. It intensified but didn't burn. It wasn't too hot.

Anastasia turned and began to move away slowly, hiding behind the thick trunk of a tall tree. The pleasant warmth did not diminish, but something new was added. It was as if something were helping my heart drive the blood through my veins, and now with each beat I had the impression that streams of blood were instantly reaching every vein in my body. I broke out in a heavy sweat, and my feet became wet.

"There, you see? Now do you understand it all?" a triumphant Anastasia said as she emerged from behind the tree, confident she had proven something. "After all, you did feel when I went behind the tree's trunk, and our feelings even intensified when you didn't see me. Tell me about them."

I told her and then asked, "What does the tree trunk prove?"

"What do you mean? The waves of information and light were going straight from me to you. When I hid, the tree trunk should have distorted them powerfully, since it has its own information and illumination, but that didn't happen."

"The waves of feeling fell on you, reflected off cosmic

bodies, and even intensified. Then I performed what you call a miracle. Your feet began to sweat. You hid that from me."

"I didn't think it was important. What's the miracle in feet sweating?"

"I drove all kinds of ailments out of your organism through your feet. You should be feeling much better now. Even outwardly it's noticeable. You're less round-shouldered."

Indeed, I did feel better physically.

"You mean you concentrate like that, you dream, and you get what you want?"

"More or less."

"And this always works for you, even when you dream of something other than healing?"

"Always. Unless it's an abstract dream. If it's detailed down to the smallest events and doesn't contradict the laws of spiritual being. That kind of dream can't always be constructed. Your thoughts have to go very, very fast, and there have to be the corresponding vibration of feelings. Then it will definitely come to pass. This is natural. This happens to many in their life. Ask people you know. You may find among them those who have dreamed something and that dream has come true, either wholly or in part."

"The details and my thoughts have to race very fast. Tell

me, when you dreamed of poets, artists, and the book, did you detail those? Did you think your thoughts fast?"

"Extraordinarily fast. And all specifically, in the tiniest detail."

"And now, do you think it will come true?"

"Yes, I do."

"Were you dreaming of anything else then? Have you told me everything about your dreams?"

"No, I haven't."

"Then tell me everything."

"You . . . You want to hear what I have to say, Vladimir? Is that true?"

"Yes."

Anastasia's face beamed, as if illuminated by a flash of light. Inspired and excited, she launched into her incredible monologue.

## ACROSS THE DARK FORCES' SPAN OF TIME

"On that night of dreamings, I thought about how to move people across the dark forces' span of time. My plan and awareness were precise and real, and *they* approved.

"The book you write will contain unobtrusive combinations and letter formulations that will give rise in most people to feelings of goodness and light. These feelings can fight physical and emotional ailments and will facilitate the birth of the new awareness intrinsic to the people of the future. Believe me, Vladimir. This is not hocus-pocus. This corresponds to the laws of the Universe.

"It's all very simple. You will write the book and be guided exclusively by your feelings and soul. Otherwise you won't be able because you don't have the writing skills. However, with feelings you can do *anything*.

"These feelings are already inside you. Both mine and yours. You're still unaware of them. They will be understood by many. Embodied in symbols and combinations, they will be more powerful than Zoroastrian fire.

"Hide nothing that has happened to you, even what you treasure most. Emancipate yourself from any shame and don't be afraid to be ridiculous. Make peace with your

pride.

"I revealed myself to you entirely—body and soul. Through you, I want to reveal myself to all people, and now this has been allowed me.

"I know the mass of dark forces that will come crashing down on me and resist my dream, but I'm not afraid of them. I'm stronger and will live to see what I have conceived.

"And I will live to give birth to and raise my son—our son, Vladimir.

"My dream will break many mechanisms of the dark forces, which have had a pernicious effect on people for millennia, and will compel many to work for good.

"I know you can't believe me right now. The conventions and many postulates engendered in your brain by the preconceptions of your world's existence act as an obstacle for you.

"The possibility of time travel seems an unlikely possibility to you. But your concepts of time and distance are relative. It is the degree of consciousness and will, not the second and meter, that characterize these dimensions. The purity of the intentions, emotions, and feelings characteristic of the majority determines the point in the Universe and time where humanity is.

"You believe in horoscopes and in your total dependence

on the disposition of the planets. This belief was achieved through the mechanisms of the dark forces. This belief slows the time of the parallel of light and gives the parallel of darkness a chance to move forward and grow bigger. This belief is leading you away from an awareness of the truth and the essence of your earthly existence.

"You have to analyze this carefully. Just think. God created man in His image and likeness. Man has been given the greatest freedom, the freedom to choose between the darkness and the light. Man has been given a Soul. Everything visible is in man's power, and man is at liberty—even with respect to God—whether to love Him or not. No one and nothing can govern man against his will. God wants man's love in exchange for His own, but God wants the love of a free man who is perfect and resembles Him.

"God created everything visible, including the planets, which provide order and harmony for every living thing—the plant and the animal worlds—and help the human flesh, but they absolutely do not govern man's soul or reason. Neither the planets nor the stars direct man, rather through his subconscious, man moves all the planets. If one man wanted a second Sun to blaze up in the sky, it wouldn't. Things are arranged to prevent a planetary disaster. But if all people simultaneously wanted a second Sun, it would appear.

"Compiling a horoscope requires, above all, taking into consideration the basic parameters: the man's level of temporal awareness, the strength of his will and spirit, the aspirations of his Soul, and the degree of its participation in the moment of present daily life. Favorable and unfavorable days, magnetic storms, and high and low pressure are freely vanquished by the will and consciousness.- Haven't you ever seen a happy and joyful man on an overcast day or in bad weather or, on the contrary, a sad, depressed man on the most propitious sunny day?

"You think I'm fantasizing like a crazy woman when I talk about how the letter combinations and formulations I place in the book will heal and enlighten people. You don't believe me because you don't understand. But in fact it's very simple.

"Here I am right now speaking your language, trying to use your turns of phrase and even intonations. It will be easy for you to remember what I've said because this is your language, inherent to you alone, but also understood by many people. It contains no incomprehensible words or rare idioms. It's simple and therefore understandable to the majority.

"But I'm changing it just a little, maybe introducing a few words, just a little bit. You're in an agitated state right now, so when you remember this state you'll remember

everything I told you, and you'll write down what I've said. That is how my letter combinations will wind up in the book you write.

"They are very important. They could work miracles, like prayer. After all, many of you already know that prayers are specific combinations of specific letters. These combinations have been constructed by enlightened men with God's help.

"The dark forces were always trying to take away man's ability to make use of the grace emanating from these combinations. For this, they even changed the language, introduced new words and removed old ones, and distorted meaning.

"Previously, for example, your language had forty-seven letters; now there are only thirty-three left. The dark forces introduced other combinations and formulas of their own, stirring up what is base and dark, and tried to distract man with carnal desires and passions. But I brought the primordialness of the combinations to the fore using only today's letters and symbols, and they will now be effective.

"I worked so hard to find them! And I did it! I gathered and collected all that was best from different times. I collected a lot. I concealed them in what you will write. As you see, this is simply a translation of a combinations of



signs from the depths of eternity and the infinity of the Cosmos, precise in meaning, significance, and purpose.

"You must write about everything you've seen and hide nothing—not the bad, not the good, not the cherished—and then they will be preserved. You will be convinced of this yourself, please believe me, Vladimir. You will be when you write it.

"In many who read what you are going to write, feelings and emotions will arise that they still do not understand or grasp completely. They will tell you this. You'll see and hear them tell you this. And they will have feelings of light, and later many themselves will understand with the help of these feelings a lot more than you will have written.

"Just write a little. When you are convinced that people are feeling these combinations. When ten, a hundred, a thousand people tell you this. Then you'll believe it and write it all. Just believe. Believe in yourself. Believe in me.

"In the future I'll be able to tell you something even more important, and they will understand and feel it.

"But even more significant is the rearing of children. You were interested in knowing about saucers and mechanisms, rockets and planets. And I so wanted to tell you more about raising children, and I will, I will tell you this when I've planted more consciousness in you.

"However, you need to read this when the sounds of man-made, artificial mechanisms aren't getting in the way. These sounds harm man and lead him away from the truth. Let the sounds of the natural world created by God remain. They bear the information of truth and grace, and they help your consciousness. Then the healing will be much more powerful.

"Once again, of course, you doubt and don't believe in the healing power of the word. You're thinking that I . . . But there is no hocus-pocus or fantasy in this whatsoever, nothing that contradicts the laws of spiritual existence. When feelings of light appear in man, they have to have a favorable influence on absolutely all the bodily organs. The feelings of light are the most powerful and effective means for countering any illness. God healed with the help of these kinds of feelings, and so did the saints. Read the Old Testament and you'll be convinced yourself. Some people of your world can also heal with the help of these feelings. Many of your doctors know about this. Ask them, if you don't believe me. After all, it's easier for you to believe them. The stronger and lighter this feeling, the greater its effect on the person to whom it is directed.

"I could always heal with my ray. When I was a child, my great-grandfather taught and explained it all to me. I've done this many times with my summer people. Right now

my ray is many times stronger than my grandfather's and great-grandfather's. They say this is because the feeling called love has appeared in me. It is very big and pleasant, and it burns a little. I would like to give it to everyone and to you. I would like everyone to feel good and everything to be good, the way God intended."

Anastasia had delivered her monologue with extraordinary inspiration and certainty, as if she had shot it into space and time. Then she fell silent.

I looked at Anastasia, stunned by her unusual fervor and certainty, and asked, "Anastasia, is that all? Are there no more nuances to your plans, your dream?"

"The rest of the details are trivial, Vladimir. Inconsequential. I created them in passing, as easily as two times two. There was just one complication that concerned you, but I've solved it."

"Please tell me in more detail. What was the complication that concerned me?"

"You have to understand. I've made you the richest man on Earth. I've also made you the most famous. This will happen in a little while. But when the dream was being specified, before it had taken off, caught up by the forces of light, the dark forces . . . they're always trying to add something harmful of their own—different side effects that ruin those it concerns and various people.

"My thoughts raced very very fast, but the dark forces caught up anyway. They abandoned many of their earthly affairs and tried to launch their own mechanisms around my dream, and that was when I came up with something. I outwitted them, and I made all their mechanisms work for the good.

"The forces of darkness were at a loss for less than an instant, but that was enough for my dream, caught up by the forces of light, to race off into the infinity of light, out of the dark forces' reach."

"What did you come up with, Anastasia?"

"Unexpectedly for them, I made the dark forces' span of time, during which you will have to overcome various difficulties, a little longer. To do this, I had to deprive myself of the possibility of helping you with my ray. They were perplexed, not seeing any logic in it on my part. Meanwhile, I shone it very very quickly on the people you will be communicating with in the future."

"What does all this mean?"

"People will help you and my dream, with their small, almost uncontrollable rays. But there will be lots of them, and together you will make my dream a material reality. You will be transported across the dark forces' span of time, and you will bring others with you.

"You will not be arrogant and greedy when you're rich

and famous because you'll understand that money is not the main thing, that it can never give you warmth or the sincere complicity of a human soul. You will understand this when you go across this span of time and see and meet these people. And they will understand, too."

"But the bows to the bankers. . . ."

"Just in case, I devised your relations with the banks as well, because you don't take care of your body at all. At least with the bowing you'll get some exercise when you withdraw money from a bank, and so will some bankers. I don't care if this is a little silly. On the other hand, there will be no sinful pride in you.

"So it has come to pass that all the difficulties and obstacles the dark forces have come up with in their span of time will temper you and those around you. They will make you more aware and safeguard you later on from the dark temptations they are so proud of. Their very actions will safeguard you, which is why they were at such a loss for a fraction of a second. Now they will never chase down my dream."

"Anastasia! My sweet dreamer. My fantasizer."

"Oh! You've done something very fine. Thank you! Thank you. You said it well, 'My sweet.'"

"You're welcome. But I did also call you a fantasizer. A dreamer. You aren't offended?"

"Not at all. You still don't know how exactly my dreams always come true when they're vivid and detailed. This one will definitely come true. It is my favorite and most vivid one. And this book will work out. People will find they have unusual feelings and these feelings will summon people to . . ."

"Wait a minute, Anastasia, You're starting to get carried away again. Calm down."

\* \* \*

Very little time had passed when I cut off Anastasia's fervent speech, which seemed nothing more than a fantasy.

I didn't quite understand her monologue's meaning. Everything she said seemed too fantastic. Only a year later did the editor of *Miracles and Adventures* read the manuscript containing that monologue and emotionally present me with the most recent issue of his magazine (May 1996).

I was gripped by emotion when I read its contents. Two major scientists, Academician Anatoly Akimov and Academician Vlail Kaznachejev, both spoke in their articles about the existence of a Supreme Reason, the close relationship between man and the Cosmos, and rays that em-

anate from man but are invisible to ordinary vision. Special instruments were able to register them, and in the journal were two photographs of these rays coming from people. But science had only begun to talk about what Anastasia had not only known since childhood but had simply used in her daily life in her efforts to help people.

How could I have known a year ago that the woman standing before me wearing her worn and only skirt and clumsy galoshes, fingering the buttons on her top agitatedly, Anastasia, would truly possess tremendous knowledge and the ability to influence human destinies? That her spiritual bursts really were capable of countering what was dark and ruinous for humanity?

That a folk healer famous in Russia, the chairman of the Russian foundation of healers, would assemble his assistants and say, "We are all bugs before her?" and add that the world had yet to know a power greater than hers. He would regret my long failure to understand her.

Many would sense an energy of tremendous power emanating from the book.

Poems would come sprinkling down like spring rain washing away the mud, after publication of the first small print run of the book, whose author, I think, is she.

Esteemed reader, you are now holding this book in your hands. Reading it. Whether it is summoning up feelings in

your soul, only you can judge. What are you feeling? What is it calling you to do?

Anastasia, left alone there in the taiga, in her glade, will keep using her ray of goodness to dispel the obstacles arising before her dream. She will keep gathering and inspiring more and more new people to make her dream come true.

Thus, in a difficult moment, three Moscow students would come to stand by my side, without proper monetary compensation for their labor (helping even me materially). Earning money where they could, they—especially Lyosha Novichkov—would spend night after night typing the text of *Anastasia* on their computers.

They would not stop typing even when their difficult semester began.

And Moscow printing press no. 11 would issue a print run of two thousand, bypassing the need for a publisher. Yet even before this, the journalist Evgenia Kvitko from the *Peasant Gazette* would be the first to talk about Anastasia in the press. Later would come Katya Golovina, from *Moscow Pravda*, then *Forest Gazette*, *World of News*, and *Radio Russia*. Disdaining tradition, *Miracles and Adventures*, which published famous luminaries of academic science, would devote several issues to Anastasia and print the following: "In their most daring dreams, academicians



have not achieved the insights of Anastasia, the sorceress from the Siberian taiga. Purity of intention makes man omnipotent and omniscient. Man is the pinnacle of creation."

Only the serious press in the capitals would publish Anastasia. It was as if Anastasia herself chose it, bypassing the tabloids, thus carefully safeguarding the purity of her dream.

But this became clear only a year after I'd met her, and then, not understanding her, not fully believing her, and relating in a unique way to what had happened, I tried to shift the conversation to a topic closer to me, entrepreneurs.

## STRONG PEOPLE

*The highest opinion of you as an individual  
is the opinion held by the people around you.*

Anastasia spoke a lot about the people we call entrepreneurs and their influence on society's spirituality. Then she picked up a twig and drew a circle in the earth. Inside the circle, she drew many more little circles, and in the middle of each of those she put a dot. On either side of this circle, more circles. It was as if she were drawing a map of the planets inside the earthly world and adding a great deal more to it.

She said, "The big circle is the Earth, the planet people live on. The small circles are small collectives of people who are bound together by something. The points are the people who lead these collectives. Whether or not the people around those leaders are doing well or badly will depend on how these leaders treat the people, what they have them do, and what kind of psychological climate they create through their influence. If the majority are doing well, a light emanation will come from each of them and

from the collective as a whole. If they are doing badly, then the emanation is dark."

She hatched over some of the little circles, making them dark.

"Of course, many other factors will affect their inner state, but in this span of time, while they're in this collective, the main factor will be their relations with their leader.

"It is very important for the Universe that light emanate from the Earth as a whole—an emanation of the light of love and good. As the Bible says, 'God is love.' I feel sorry, very sorry, for the people you call entrepreneurs. They are the most unfortunate of all. I so wanted to help them, but it's hard for me to do that alone."

"You're wrong, Anastasia. We consider the most unfortunate to be the pensioners, people who don't know how to find work and provide themselves with the necessary housing, clothing, and food. An entrepreneur is a person who has all this to a greater degree than others. He has access to pleasures others can't even dream of."

"What kind, for example?"

"Well, even if we take the average entrepreneur, he has a modern car and an apartment. He has no problems at all with clothing and food."

"What about joy? Satisfaction in something? Look."

Once again Anastasia drew my attention to the grass and, like the first time, when she'd shown me the woman gardener, began showing me other scenes.

"There, you see? There he is sitting in the car you call stylish. See? He's alone in the back seat, and it's warm and cozy in the car. His experienced chauffeur is driving very smoothly. But look at how tense and pensive the face of the entrepreneur sitting in the back seat is. He's thinking, making plans, he's afraid of something. Look, he's picked up what you call a telephone. He's worried. There! he's received the information. . . . Now he has to assess it quickly and come up with a decision. He's all tense. He's thinking. It's ready, his decision has been made. Now look. Look, he's sitting calmly, apparently, but there is doubt and alarm on his face. No joy at all. Outside his car it's spring, but he neither sees nor feels the spring."

"It's work, Anastasia."

"It's a way of life, and there's no break from the moment he wakes up to the moment he falls asleep, and even in his sleep. He doesn't see the budding leaves or the springtime rivulets. He's perpetually surrounded by envious rivals who want to take away what he has. The attempt to wall himself off from them with what you call security and a fortress-like house does not bring complete peace, since the fear and worry are inside him and remain with him al-

ways. So it is until he dies, and just before the end of his life he regrets that he had to leave everything behind."

"The entrepreneur does have joys. They come when he achieves a desired result and carries out a plan he's made."

"That's not true. He doesn't have time to rejoice in what he's achieved because it's followed by another plan, a more complicated plan, and it all starts in again, only with greater difficulties."

The forest beauty was drawing me a very gloomy and sad picture about the outwardly prosperous stratum of our society, and I didn't want to believe this picture. I tried to refute her.

"Anastasia, you forget their ability to achieve the goal they've set and obtain the good things in life, the admiring looks of women, and the respect of those around them."

"An illusion," she replied. "None of that exists. Where have you seen a respectful or admiring look from someone gazing at the passenger of a stylish car or the owner of the richest dwelling? There's not one person who would confirm what you've said. Those are looks of envy, indifference, and irritation. Even women can't love these men because their emotion is tainted by the desire to possess not only this person, but his property as well. In turn, these men cannot truly love a woman because they can't free up enough space for such a great emotion."

The search for further arguments was pointless, since what she'd said could only be confirmed or refuted by the people she was talking about. As an entrepreneur myself, I had never given any thought to what Anastasia said, had not analyzed the number of my minutes of joy, and I certainly could not do that for others. Entrepreneurs just don't snivel or complain. Each strives to look successful and content with his life. This is probably why for most people the image of the entrepreneur is someone getting nothing but good things from life.

Anastasia was picking up not the outward manifestation of feelings but the subtler ones concealed within. She defined man's condition based on how much light she saw. It seemed to me that I could see the scenes and situation she saw more from her voice. I told Anastasia this.

She replied, "I will help you right now. It's simple. Close your eyes and lie on the grass with your arms out to the sides. You have to relax. Mentally imagine the whole Earth. Try to see its color and the blue glow coming from it. Then narrow your imagination's ray, don't let it take in the whole Earth but make it narrower and narrower until you see specific details. Look for people where there is the most blue light. Narrow your ray even more and you'll see one person or several. Try it again with my help."

She took my hand and lined her fingers up with mine,

resting their tips in my palm. The fingers of her other hand lying in the grass pointed up. Mentally I did everything she said, and there arose before me, though not very distinctly, a scene of three people sitting at a table and conversing excitedly. I couldn't understand what they were saying. I heard no speech of any kind.

"No," Anastasia said, "these aren't entrepreneurs. We'll find them now."

She kept leading me on with her ray, going into offices big and small, private clubs, feasts and brothels. The blue glow was either very weak or absent altogether.

"Look, it's night there already, but he's still sitting alone in his smoke-filled office. Something's not right for this entrepreneur. And this one, look how pleased he is, in a pool, and the girls beside him. He's high, but there's no glow. He's simply trying to forget, and his self-satisfaction is artificial.

"This one is at home. There's his wife, and his child is asking him something. The telephone rings. There, look, he's serious again, and even the people close to him have receded into the background."

And again, one after the other, every possible situation was illuminated, some outwardly good and some not very, until we came across a horrifying scene.

Suddenly, we saw a room, probably in some apartment, a

fairly respectable one, but lying on a round table was a naked man. His hands and feet were tied to the table legs, his head dangled, and his mouth was sealed with brown tape. Sitting at the table were two young, solidly built men, one with a buzz cut, the other with slicked-down hair. In an armchair set back under a floor lamp sat a young woman. Her mouth was taped, too, and a fabric cord below her breasts strapped her to the chair. Each leg was tied to a leg of the chair. She was only wearing a torn slip. An emaciated older man was sitting next to her drinking something, probably brandy.

There was chocolate on the small table in front of him. Those sitting at the round table were not drinking. They poured a liquid—vodka or alcohol—on the lying man's chest and lit it. "They're settling a score," I realized.

Anastasia moved her ray away from the scene, but I exclaimed, "Bring it back. Do something!"

She brought the scene back and replied, "I can't. It's all in the past. This can't be stopped. It had to be done before. Now it's too late."

I watched as if a spell had been cast over me and all of a sudden clearly saw the woman's eyes, which were filled with horror and begging for mercy.

"Do something! If you have a heart, do at least something!" I shouted at Anastasia.



"But this isn't in my power. This was preprogrammed, and not by me, and I can't intervene directly. They're stronger now."

"So where is this goodness of yours, this ability?"

Anastasia was silent. The terrible scene clouded over slightly. Then the old man drinking brandy suddenly disappeared. Suddenly I felt a weakness through my whole body. I also felt my hand that was touching Anastasia start to go numb. I heard her somewhat weakened voice. She could barely get the words out.

"Take away your hand, Vladimi ..." She couldn't even say my whole name.

Rising, I pulled my hand away from Anastasia.

My hand hung as if numb, the way you get pins and needles sometimes, and it was all white. I wiggled my fingers and the numbness started to pass.

I took one look at Anastasia and was horrified. Her eyes were closed. The pink had drained from her face. Her hands and face seemed to have no blood at all under the skin. She lay there as if lifeless.

The grass around her for a radius of about three meters was also white and wilted. I realized something horrible had happened and I shouted, "Anastasia! What's happened to you, Anastasia?"

She did not react to my cry in any way. Then I grabbed

her by the shoulders and shook her no longer resilient but rather limp body. Still her perfectly white, bloodless lips were silent.

"Can you hear me, Anastasia?"

Her eyelashes raised a very little and her lackluster eyes looked at me, no longer expressing anything. I grabbed a flask of water, lifted Anastasia's chin, and tried to get her to drink, but she couldn't swallow. I looked at her and thought feverishly about what I should do.

Finally her lips stirred ever so slightly, and she whispered, "Move me somewhere else . . . to a tree."

I lifted her limp body, carried her away from the circle of white grass, and lay her next to the nearest cedar. After a while she began to come around a little, and I asked, "What was it that happened to you, Anastasia?"

"I tried to carry out your request, Vladimir," she answered softly, and a minute later added, "I think it worked."

"But you look so awful. Did you almost die?"

"I broke the natural laws. I interfered where I shouldn't have. This took all my power and energy. I'm amazed it was enough."

"Why did you take that risk if it was so dangerous?"

"I had no choice. You wanted it. I was afraid not to carry out your request, afraid you would stop respecting me en-

tirely. You would think I was just talking, always talking, and I couldn't do anything in real life."

Her eyes looked at me imploringly, and her soft voice shook a little when she said, "But I can't explain to you how it's done, how this natural mechanism works. I feel it, but I can't explain it so you'd understand, and your scientists still couldn't either, probably."

She lowered her head and fell silent, as if summoning her powers. Once again she looked at me with pleading eyes and said, "Now you'll consider me crazy or a witch even more."

All of a sudden I had a strong urge to do something nice for her, but what?

I wanted to say I considered her a normal, ordinary person, a handsome and intelligent woman, but I didn't have the sensation of an ordinary relation toward her, and she with her intuition would not have believed me.

Suddenly, I remembered her story about how her great-grandfather usually greeted her when she was a child. How her gray-haired great-grandfather had knelt on one knee before little Anastasia and kissed her little hand.

I went down on one knee in front of Anastasia, took her still pale and slightly cold hand, kissed it, and said, "If you are a crazy woman, then you are the best, noblest, smartest, and most beautiful crazy woman of all."

A smile finally touched Anastasia's lip again, and her eyes looked at me gratefully. The color began to return to her cheeks.

"Anastasia, that scene was fairly dreary. Did you choose it especially?"

"I was looking for at least one example, a good one, but I couldn't find one. They're all in the grip of their worries. They're face-to-face with their problems, and they have almost no spiritual communication."

"So what can be done? What can you suggest other than pity for them? But I have to tell you, these are strong people, these entrepreneurs."

"Very strong," she agreed, "and interesting. They seem to be living two lives in the space of one. One life is known only to them, not even to the people close to them; the other is their outward life, for those around them. But I think they have to be helped by strengthening spiritual and sincere communication among themselves. They need to strive openly for purity of intention."

"Anastasia, I will probably try to do what you've asked. I'll try to write the book and create an association of entrepreneurs with pure intentions, but only as I myself have understood this."

"It will be hard for you. I won't be able to help you enough, I have so little strength left. It will take me a long

time to restore it. For a while now I won't be able to see at a distance with my ray. Even now I don't see you very well with my ordinary vision."

"You mean you're going blind, Anastasia?"

"I think it will all be restored. Only it's too bad that for a while I won't be able to help you."

"You don't need to help me, Anastasia. Try to safeguard yourself for our son and help others."

\* \* \*

I had to leave and catch up with the ship. I waited for her to look almost like her former self, at least outwardly, and climbed into my boat. Anastasia grabbed the handle on its bow and gave it a shove. The boat was picked up by the current and carried off.

Anastasia was standing almost to her knees in the water, and the hem of her long skirt was wet and floating on the waves.

I pulled the outboard's cord. The engine caught, rending the silence I'd grown accustomed to over the last three days, and the boat jerked forward, gathering more and more speed, moving away from the taiga hermit standing in the water all alone by the shore.

All of a sudden, Anastasia got out of the water and ran down the shore to catch up with the boat.

Her hair, streaming in the oncoming wind, looked like a comet's tail. She was trying to run very fast, probably using all her strength in doing so, trying to do the impossible: catch up with a fast-moving boat. But even she couldn't do that.

The distance between Anastasia running along the shore and the boat slowly increased.

I felt sorry for her useless efforts, and wishing to put an end to the distressing moment of parting as quickly as possible, I jammed the throttle down with all my might. The thought flashed through my mind that Anastasia might think I had once again been frightened by her and was running away. The engine roaring in anguish made the bow rise above the water as the boat rushed forward, increasing the distance between us even faster.

While she . . . Lord! What was she doing?

Anastasia had ripped off her wet skirt, which was getting in the way of her running, as she ran and tossed the torn clothing aside. The speed of her running increased, and something incredible happened. Slowly the distance between her and the boat began to diminish. I could see an almost sheer cliff up ahead in her path.

Continuing to press the now unyielding throttle, I

thought the cliff would stop her and put an end to this tortuous scene. But Anastasia kept up her swift running, and from time to time she stretched her hands out in front of her, as if groping the space with them. Had her vision really deteriorated so much that she didn't see the cliff?

Without slowing her pace in the least, Anastasia ran up the cliff, fell to her knees, raised her hands to the sky, and began to shout more or less in my direction. I heard her voice through the engine's wild roar and the water's noise, I heard what seemed like a whisper: "Sand-bar a-head, sand-bar, sun-ken logs."

Quickly turning my head, still not fully realizing what was happen, I turned the wheel so abruptly that the boat heeled sharply and nearly started taking on water.

A huge submerged log, popularly called a *toplyak*, one end stuck in the sandbar, the other barely poking out of the water, just grazed the speeding boat. A direct strike would have ripped through its thin aluminum bottom.

When I had escaped to the river's channel, I looked back at the cliff and whispered in the direction of the lonely kneeling figure, which was becoming an ever littler spot.

"Thank you, Anastasia."

## WHO ARE YOU, ANASTASIA?

The ship was waiting for me in Surgut. Captain and crew awaited orders. But I just couldn't concentrate enough to decide on our route, so I gave orders to extend our stay in Surgut, have a party for the local population, and hold a consumer goods and services show.

My thoughts were occupied by the events connected with Anastasia. I bought a lot of popular scientific literature in a store, books about unusual phenomena and people's abilities and the history of the Siberian land. I locked myself in my cabin as I tried to find an explanation in books.

A few questions arose concerning our life. One of them will not quit me even now: Is our system of education and childrearing sufficient for grasping the essence of being and for each person to set priorities in his life correctly? Does that system help or hinder us in making sense of man's essence and purpose?

We have created a huge system of education. We teach our children and one another on the basis of this system: in kindergarten, school, higher education, and graduate school. This system has allowed us to invent things and fly



into the Cosmos. Following it, we build our own daily life accordingly. With its help we try to construct our own happiness.

We try to understand the Cosmos, the atom, and various anomalous phenomena, which we love to discuss and describe in sensational articles in the press and scientific publications. Only one phenomenon do we for some reason persist in skirting—and skirting very diligently! We give the impression of being afraid to talk about it, afraid because it so easily demolishes our fundamental system of education and scientific conclusions and laughs at the realities of our daily life! We try to pretend there is no such phenomenon, but there is and will be, no matter how much we turn away from it or evade it.

Isn't it time we took a closer look at it and perhaps, through the combined efforts of human minds, answer this question: Why have all the great thinkers without exception, the people who have created religious and philosophical teachings, the different teachings that the majority of humanity follow (or at least try to follow) been hermits before creating their teachings? Why have they secluded themselves, and in most instances in the forest? Note, not in some super-academy, but specifically in the forest.

Why did the Old Testament Moses go alone into the mountain wilderness for so long and then return to reveal

to the world the wisdom set forth on the stone tablets?

Why did Jesus Christ seclude himself even from his disciples in the desert, mountains, and forest?

Why did a man by the name of Siddhartha Gautama, who lived in India in the mid-sixth century BC, seclude himself in the forest for seven years?

Then hermit Siddhartha Gautama came out of the forest and gave people his teaching—a teaching that to this day, millennia later, excites so many men's minds. People build large temples and call this teaching Buddhism. Later they called this man the Buddha.

Why did our not-so-very-distant ancestors, who are now historical figures, like Serafim of Sarov or Sergius of Radonezh, also go into the forest as hermits and after a short period of time attain wisdom of such depth that the kings of the world crossed trackless expanses to go see them?

Monasteries and magnificent temples were erected on the site of their hermitage. Thus Troitse-Sergiev Lavra, in Sergiev Posad, in the Moscow region, for example, attracts crowds of people even today. And all this began with just one forest hermit.

Why? What or who helped these people achieve wisdom? What gave them knowledge and brought them closer to understanding the essence of being? How did they live,

what did they do, and what did they think about while they were secluded in the forest? Who taught them?

These questions began suggesting themselves to me a while after my contact with Anastasia. Then I began to read everything I could find about hermits.

But I have yet to find the answer, because nowhere is it written what happened to them there.

I think the answers need to be sought through joint efforts. I am trying to describe the events of my three-day sojourn in the Siberian taiga forest and my feelings from my encounter with Anastasia in the hope that someone will be able to grasp the essence of this phenomenon and make sense of our way of life.

From everything I've seen and heard so far, only one thing is indisputable: people who live as hermits in the forest, including Anastasia, see what is going on in our life from an angle distinct from ours. Some of Anastasia's notions are 180 degrees opposite those commonly accepted. Who is closer to the truth? Who should judge this?

My task has been merely to set forth what I saw and heard in order to give others the opportunity to respond.

Meanwhile, I was also interested in whether a feeling of love could truly be born in Anastasia just because, while trying to help a village girl, she had cried out, "I love you, Vladimir!"

Why did the simple words we utter, often without investing sufficient worthy feeling in them, affect Anastasia, despite the difference in our age, and despite the difference in our views on and way of life?

The popular scientific literature provided no answers. Then I picked up the Bible and found the answer. At the very beginning of John's gospel, it says, "In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was GOD."

How many times had that struck me—such a laconic and precise definition of this amazing book!

A great deal became clear to me all at once. Not knowing cunning or deceit, Anastasia cannot utter words blithely. I remembered what she'd said: "I actually forgot that I can't just say words, that they have to have feelings behind them, a consciousness and authenticity of natural information."

Oh my God! How unlucky she was! Why say these words to me, a family man, no longer young, subject to the many temptations of our world, ruinous and dark temptations, as she herself said? With her inner purity, she deserved someone completely different, but who could love her, with her unusual way of life, mind set, and intellect? At first glance, she appeared to be an ordinary, only unusually beautiful and attractive young woman, but later, when

you started to communicate, she seemed to be transformed into a being living beyond the bounds of the rational.

These feelings may have arisen in me because I didn't have sufficient knowledge or understanding of the essence of our existence. Others might perceive her differently.

I recalled that even in parting I had no desire to kiss or hug her. I don't know whether she wanted that. What did she want anyway?

I recalled her telling me about her dreams. What a strange philosophy of her love: organize a community of entrepreneurs in order to help them. Write a book with her reflections for people. Transport people across the dark forces' span of time.

And she believed it! She was convinced all this would come to pass. I'm a fine one. I gave her my word I would try to organize a community of entrepreneurs and write a book. Now she was probably dreaming of this even more. She should have come up with something a little simpler and more realistic.

An incomprehensible compassion for Anastasia arose in me. I imagined her waiting in her forest and dreaming that everything would actually happen. If she was just waiting, just dreaming, that was fine. For all I knew, she might still begin to make certain attempts and direct her ray of good-

ness, expend her soul's colossal energy, and believe in the impossible. Although she had demonstrated to me the possibilities of her ray and tried to explain its mechanism, my consciousness had not accepted it as a reality. Judge for yourself. According to her, she directed her ray at a person, shone an invisible light on him, and bestowed on him her feelings and desire for what was good and light.

"No, no, just don't think I'm interfering in the psyche or violating the soul and reason. Man is free to take or reject these feelings, to whatever extent he likes and they're close to his soul, however much of these feelings he can hold inside. Then he will become lighter outwardly, too, and your illnesses will abate, either in part or in full. My grandfather and great-grandfather can do this, and I could always do it. My great-grandfather taught me when he was playing with me in my childhood. But now my ray has become many times more powerful than my grandfather's and great-grandfather's because, they say, this unusual emotion called love has been born in me. It is very bright and even burns a little. I have so much of it and I want to give it."

"To whom, Anastasia?" I asked.

"To you and to people, anyone who might accept it. I want everyone to feel good. When you start doing what I've dreamed of, I'll bring many of these people to you, and

together you . . ."

Recalling all this and picturing her, I suddenly realized I couldn't not try at least to do what she wanted. Otherwise, doubts would torment me the rest of my life and I would be left feeling I had betrayed Anastasia's dream. It may not be very realistic, but she wanted it so passionately.

I made a decision for myself, and the steamer set out straight for Novosibirsk.

I assigned its unloading and the disassembly of the exhibit equipment to the CEO of my firm. I tried to explain myself to my wife and left for Moscow.

I left to make—or at least attempt to make, at least in part—Anastasia's dream a reality.

*To be continued...*

## AN APPEAL FROM VLADIMIR MEGRE TO HIS READERS

Several Internet websites now share ideas that are very similar to those of the main character, Anastasia, in the "Ringing Cedars of Russia" series.

Many of these websites purport to be official and use the name "Vladimir Megre." They even answer letters in my name.

In this regard, I feel it is my duty to inform you, dear readers, of my decision to create an official international website, [www.vmegre.com/en/](http://www.vmegre.com/en/) .

*This will be the only official source for correspondence in all languages from my readers all over the world.*

By registering at and subscribing to this website you will be eligible to receive information on the dates and locations of upcoming reader conferences, as well as other information.

Our unified website will keep you, dear readers, informed about the Ringing Cedars of Russia movement throughout the world.

Yours truly,  
**Vladimir Megre**



[www.vmegre.com](http://www.vmegre.com) The official site of the author

[www.Anastasia.ru](http://www.Anastasia.ru) An international portal

[www.megrellc.com](http://www.megrellc.com) The "Ringing Cedars" company presents products, self-manufactured in the taiga, as well as products of Kin's domains.