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Larik & Vitya

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Reviews

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Reviews0:00/383.9150341×Please enjoy the recording and let's appreciate the fantastic work [Vladibear](#) put into the recording of this story.

One day Illarion Illarionovich, a young filmmaker with an exquisite structure of face and body, even more exquisite structure of mind, was spending the late hours of the evening sorting out correspondence in the studio with Vitya, his colleague and comrade. Vitya, stocky and bearded, stood with a pile of paper in his hands, smoking an odorous papirosa¹. Torn envelopes spread out on the table. A pathéphone was spewing jazz sounds.

– Here, read it, I told ya, – said Vitya, chewing the papirosa, and handed to Illarion Illarionovich one of the letters.

Illarion Illarionovich waved off the smoke, straightened the folded sheet and began to read:

– “Watched until 2:32, couldn't bear it anymore. Very slow and very boring beginning, 0 dynamic, 0 action”

Illarion Illarionovich shoved the letter back to Vitya like a hot potato.

– Come on, Vitya, I’ve read a dozen of these already.

– Wait, wait. Keep reading.

Illarion Illarionovich looked at Vitya with deep displeasure for a moment but kept reading the scribbles. His eyes had begun to widen more and more with every word adding a glimpse of vexation and surprise on his face.

– “I don’t watch films or tv shows or anime because it’s impossible to watch for the same reason. Unbearable from the first minutes – very dull and boring. I can only watch short clips where many actions per second happen.”

Illarion Illarionovich turned away from Vitya and looked into the window, blinking nervously twice.

Vitya puffed once more.

– I don’t get it at all. Photography is truth but cinema is truth twenty-four frames per second. What’s wrong? – said Illarion Illarionovich.

– We should’ve done, eh, forty-eight frames. Twice as much truth. Perhaps, they’d have got imbued then.

Vitya grinned, philosophically glancing at his papirosa.

– Joking again, aren’t you, Vitya.

– What else am I supposed to do, Larik²? Here, look, another one: “You know, people prefer watching cinematographic action with a bad picture rather than a beautiful humdrum. This is not a film. Not a film, so stop trying to make one. With the skills you have, you can create much more intense action. No offence.”

Illarion Illarionovich shrugged.

– “No offence,” see? – Vitya showed Illarion Illarionovich the letter. – No offence but I’m still offended. It caused me emotional damage. I put my whole cinematographic soul in it: bought new lenses, set up lights properly, calculated symmetry, and all that stuff just like fucking Kubrick, for God’s sake. I wasn’t even seen in reflections, not once.

– Our film is something greater than a sequence of images, Vitya.

Vitya’s eyes widened, his eyebrows raised and he gave Illarion Illarionovich a look Illarion Illarionovich hadn’t seen before, such look as if it gently invited him to elaborate.

Illarion Illarionovich stood up to open the window and his chair creaked.

Vitya, meanwhile, continued to aggressively fill the interior with the odour of papirosa, fighting against the fresh air for control over the room.

– It is Art. It is a life-affirming picture.

Illarion Illarionovich's lips tightened, his eyes closed, he opened them and looked out of the window. Classical music started playing in his head.

– It is the truth about mankind, their place in the universe; the truth nobody can tell you; the truth no money can buy; the truth you can read in no book. It awakens our innermost feelings and lets us see life as it is.

Vitya shook his papirosa against the ashtray.

– No one needs your life-affirming truth. Why would anyone in their sober consciousness want to know what an existential arsehole they're in? Would you want to know?

– You don't get out much, Vitya. It's not about what kind of an arsehole, but why.

– Well, so why, why then?

– No words can convey it, you can only see and feel it.

– No words, you say? Here, look at this.

Vitya handed Illarion Illarionovich another sheet of paper.

– I don't want to.

– Read it, read it. This letter puts it all into perspective. Brief, clear, succinct. *With meaning*, as you like it.

Illarion Illarionovich's eyebrows furrowed. He sighed heavily but took the sheet.

A moment later, the condemnation in Illarion Illarionovich's eyes met with a smile in Vitya's eyes. Illarion Illarionovich slightly crumpled the sheet, threw it in Vitya's face and hurried out of the room.

Vitya sighed, shrugged, extinguished his papirosa and followed out Illarion Illarionovich.

– Larik, wait!

The crumpled sheet of paper was left lying on the floor, hiding a lonely word - “shit”.

Notes

1. *Papirósa* - a style of Russian filterless cigarette.
2. *Larik* is a short and informal version of *Illarion*, similar to Thomas → Tom.

Look At The Horizon

nova-nevedoma.com/look-at-the-horizon/

Look At The Horizon0:00/488.0634481×Please enjoy the recording and let's appreciate the fantastic work [Vladibear](#) put into the recording of this story.

One day Illarion Illarionovich, an enthusiastic esthete with exquisite features of his appearance and even more exquisite features of thought sat marvelling at the setting sun sinking slowly down the murk beyond the edge of the ocean, and chatted with Vitya, grimacing, hunching, wrapping his arms around the warmth of his body, defending against the evening marine chill. Upwards the beach the seagulls screeched. Around, the warning waves surged, gurgled, hissed, tickling Illarion Illarionovich's toes, quite romantically so.

'I call it "a writer's beach". When I start wondering where is my muse, I always come to wander around here, wait for her to find me, or just sit and enjoy the view, thinking of something good, something that heals me, innermostly,' said Illarion Illarionovich and ravenously recharged his lungs with the marine air.

'I ain't see no writer's bitch. Did she drown?'

Illarion Illarionovich laughed blissfully, wagging his elegant index finger

at Vitya. ‘You and your dark jokes again. Look around, beauty is everywhere here.’

Vitya looked around: at the ocean, at rocks on the left, at rocks on the right, at rocks on the far left, at rocks on the far right, at wee rocks under himself, arse-hurting peddles, hunched more.

‘Charming spot. Inspiring prospects.’

‘It is. I know, for you it is the first time, but for me, it is like a recurring reverie. Every time I come here, that bizarre déjà vu touches upon me, as if I am here for the first time despite it is all so familiar.’

Vitya’s teeth rattled, he said, ‘Because you’ve been here before, that’s why.’

‘You do not get out much, Vitya. It is not about what kind of a place but what you feel being there. What do you feel?’

‘I feel like it’s a good spot to kill oneself.’

‘That is a bad thought. This is not why we are here for. I know you are a bit cynical person but...’

‘Am I a cynical person?..’

‘Please, do not interrupt...’

‘...well maybe, in relation to this bloody miserable shithole – yes.’

‘What I am trying to convey, is places like this are sanctuaries from all negative. Water, sky and earth meet here. The sky shows us where we should aspire to be. The earth – how grounded we are, mere humans. And the element of water glues those two sensations together, for it is connected to human emotion. When you come here, you seek inspiration, personal healing, reflection, escape, boost your magnesium levels...’

‘Dafu...’ muttered Vitya

‘...It is one of those places where you can reach the euphoric climax. See, the beach is all about freedom from all of the nonsense and worry that occurs in your everyday life...’

‘The water, look at it,’ Vitya pointed at the waves escaping them, ‘it’s running away from us. This murky stinking puddle bastard is running away! It ain’t want to heal us!’

‘It’s not holy water, Vitya. Again, it is all in your mind. To truly see something, to let your good thoughts bud and bad thoughts diminish, you shall shut your eyes.’

‘That makes no sense, Larik.’

‘It does. Let me teach you.’

‘Alright. Teach.’

‘Shut your eyes.’

Vitya squeezed his eyelids with all his might.

‘What do you see?’

‘Kaleidoscope. The shroomie feeling, remember?’

Illarion looked at him. ‘No, not that tight. Just relax. Imagine you are sleeping, dreaming.’

‘Alright. I’m relaxed.’

‘Now, signatures of all things you are here to read: hear how the ocean murmuring at the distance... how waves polish the rocks in front of you... how the wind whistles... how the seagulls screech above us... how your heart beats... All these sounds are the environment, the outward pressure. In a way, it is a cage, but what you must do is to elevate your consciousness to the level above it, acknowledge what is happening around you, and in your mind build an image of something pleasant.’ Illarion Illarionovich paused for a few seconds. ‘Now, what do you see?’

Vitya shivered, and said, ‘A jug of hot steaming glühwein.’

‘Good, good. What else?’

‘Jellyfish.’

‘Alright, good. Beautiful, isn’t it?’

‘They sting me.’

‘Oh, no. You should think of something good, something pleasant, something that makes you happy. That is crucial.’

‘Okay, okay.’ Vitya paused, they both did.

Upwards the beach, in the sky, the dark clouds gathered. Louder and louder roared the escaping water. The seagulls disappeared. The sun’s red disk shrunk almost to the state of none. It all started to look like one of those few Aivazovsky’s grim paintings of tempests. After a minute or so, Illarion Illarionovich looked at Vitya, who was trembling and clenching his teeth even more than before, and asked, ‘Now, what’s on your mind?’

‘Has this miserable shithole vanished since?’

Illarion Illarionovich shook his head, and shouted, hysterically, ‘I’m trying to teach you something important! You need to focus!’

‘Alright, alright. Shite... look at you, Mr Tranquility.’

‘You are not listening. I know, times change, and even if the world around us is in flux, there is always hope, there is always a place for something good. Look, there on the edge, you see it, growing. Look at it, look, look at the horizon. Sometimes, it is not the sun that hides behind the horizon, but the horizon that hides the sun from our sight as if it is something we are trembling creatures are not supposed to see, as if it is something inconceivable for us as if at first we should find light in ourselves.’

Vitya looked into the distance, squinting, where the sun was indeed hiding and the horizon was indeed growing, quickly as if someone accelerated the Earth's spinning. His eyes widened, he gulped.

'You know what I'm seeing? A fucking tsunami.'

Beelzebufo, The Annihilator Of Dinosaurs

nova-nevedoma.com/beelzebufo-the-annihilator-of-dinosaurs/

This is my second piece for the [STSC Symposium](#), a monthly collaboration of artists around a set theme. The February 2023's topic was "Dinosaurs" (YES) —Of course, Larik, we have a chance to make a fucking brilliant film with a real fucking dinosaur and you're gonna stuff it with fucking drama.

—But everything's better with dinosaurs.

—Except for drama! Let's flush the luck down the loo again!

—Nobody's flushing anything down the loo, Vitya.

—You! You! Tell me what kind of a cheesy fucking film is that? Have you seen even once a fucking dinosaur drama?

—Exactly! That's the point!

At first, the author did not want to take any risque to interrupt the intellectual discourse between two people enthusiastic about their craft and decided that he'd better behold it from a distance because he thought that staying away could conduce to more natural and productive dialogue, moreover, it felt a bit uncultured to meddle in

amidst the conversation; but, for the reader to grasp at least the gist of the scene, the author felt obliged to provide some scene descriptions.

It so happened the other evening that Illarion Illarionovich, a person of extraordinarily high thought and no less high ambition, and Vitya, his good comrade and fellow cinematographer, were discussing the idea for their next film, snacking with some substances, to be precise, dried ambassadors of the fungi kingdom, pulling them one by one from an outlandish box, chewing diligently, washing them down with pure spring water.

—Shut up you cunt! Intellectual fucking discourse, would you be so kind telling me, sir, if you can comprehend our words properly? Or do you fancy a cuppa, sir?—said Vitya, jumping up his chair.

—Hey! Vitya! I'm here. Who are you talking to?—said Illarion Illarionovich, waving his hand.

—Well, definitely not to you!—said Vitya shaking his head.

—Tell me, who? I'll keep it secret, promise.

After rubbing his eyes, Vitya pointed out at a suit-dressed dinosaur sitting quietly in a chair on the other side of the room. Sharp teeth, tail, reptile eyes, feathers—the full range of dinosaur equipment.

—Do you see the dinosaur?

—I do see the dinosaur.

—I do see it too.

—But it's not talking.

—Well let it keep doing so, it's casting and nobody gave him a fucking word yet!

—Nobody did.

—I would've flushed my fucking mind down the loo if he'd started talking!

—Yeah, I would, too, putting it gently, be quite flabbergasted.

—That's exactly what I'm saying to you, stop perverting my words.

Vitya returned to his chair, reached to the outlandish box for the next treat, devoured it, savouring, reached for his papirosas case, took one, lit it up, closed his eyes and greedily filled his lungs with bitter and aromatic smoke, leaning back blissfully in a tobaccogasm. Illarion Illarionovich, meanwhile, slid the outlandish box to himself and repeated the ritual after Vitya.

—So, tell me Larik, how did that brilliant idea of yours to film a dinosaur in a drama crawl into that brilliant mind of yours?

—I believe that our work must crawl deep into one's heart, penetrate their soul fibres, engorge their minds, their spirits.

—Look at his fucking teeth, his claws! This is what should crawl to

one's heart in our film!

—Vitya, my dear friend, there are hundreds of films where dinosaurs kill people or stroll through the cities, crashing skyscrapers. Does anyone still care about those things?

—They do. But our film will be even better. We'll make it all real. Our killer has feathers as it's supposed to.

—Feathers? I see no feathers on him.

—Don't fucking bullshit me, not in this situation.

—Weird...

—It wouldn't've been so weird if you put your fucking glasses on.

Illarion Illarinovich took glasses from the table and put them on.

—Of course! Feathers! He's a bird!

—He ain't no bloody bird! Look at him, he's fucking predator, and you want to put him into a tear-drenching drama like a chicken cunt! Ugh... If you still want to be like bloody Spielberg you have to make a film about dinosaurs eating people.

—We can also make *Schindler's List*.

—Just to remind you, we have a DINOSAUR sitting here waiting to be cast in our film!

—We can make *Schindler's List* about dinosaurs, figuratively speaking.

—Larik, you can't make *Schindler's List* without making *Jurassic Park* first, practically speaking. This is how the film industry works!

—There'll be explosions.

—What?—Vitya almost jumped out of surprise.—Explosions? In your film?

—In my film, yes.

—Am I sleeping? In a drama?

—In a drama, yes.

—The explosions of what? Audience's patience?

—Meteorite.

—Ah, of course, “meteorite”, a bloody original premise, Larik.

—So the script goes like this: Act 1 is about a family of dinosaurs dwelling in a green utopian valley.

—Oh, please, shut up. Where'd we get a whole bloody family? We have only one!

Splashing saliva, Vitya pointed at the dinosaur.

—Wait, Vitya, please listen to me.

Waving his free hand, Vitya began obscenely fuming the room.

—We will show the life of dinosaurs right when the meteorite hit the Earth, how they're clinging to life, trying to stay themselves in the face of the apocalypse, but their attempts are futile—that black cosmic swan is ineluctable, and we watch how dinosaurs die one by one.

The dinosaur sitting on the other side of the room gulped.

—What kind of shite for bored housewives is that?

—You don't understand, Vitya. It will be a metaphor for how fragile life is, how one event can bring it all to smithereens, how futile is our existence, and how we're just trembling creatures in the face of universal randomness.

—I actually like this misery bit but let's change the plot, let's cut the meteorite.

—How's that supposed to work?

—I'll tell you, using your cuntish creativity! No bloody meteorite whatsoever. We'll make it the other, better way.

—And what is the other way, better way?

—Beelzebufo ate them all.

—Huh?

—A-fucking-huh. Beelzebufo, a big bloody devil frog.

—But Vitya... Frogs can't eat dinosaurs. I think you have to quit these,—said Illarion Illarionovich and pulled the outlandish box away from Vitya.

—They fucking can,—said Vitya, and pulled the box back, took a mushroom and put it into his mouth, then he continued talking, still chewing.—So, how the script goes is, once upon a prehistoric time, there lived a big frog, Beelzebufo, an all-round good bloke. We see Beelzebufo doing its frog things, jumping and whatever, while the narrator in a fairy tale voice with a British accent tells us about Beelzebufo and the world it lives in. Then in the next scene, we see dinosaurs running around the green utopian valley, maybe a family of dinosaurs, if you wish, and BOOM! Beelzebufo attacks the dino kids and eats them! We hear the crunching sounds of little dinosaurs, this is fucking drama for you.

The suit-dressed dinosaur wagged his tail uneasily.

—And what about their parents, the big ones?

—And big ones, too, of course. So, this frog is a predator of cunning abilities. It eats the dinosaurs, starting small, one by one, slowly, little dinos at first, then it grows up more and more and more and more, eats more dinosaurs, bigger ones, grows, grows together with its hunger, eats a bloody T-Rex like a fucking shortbread, grows until it devours all the dinosaurs on the planet and then stops growing.

—Now this is interesting! This is the metaphor for capitalism, am I right?

—You’re fucking not. It’s not a metaphor, it’s a fucking horror story, a slasher with dinosaurs but dinosaurs are victims this time.

—But there’s always a metaphor, Vitya. Even our dialogue is a metaphor or an allusion to something.

—This is fucking tragedy of modernity of the genuine purity, pure like the infant’s tear, there’s no fucking metaphor mixed in it.

—I don’t understand how this story works then.

—It works because it’s cool, this is something beyond your terms of comprehension, Larik. We’ll call it “Beelzebufo, The Annihilator Of Dinosaurs”, even the fucking Godzilla would pee its pants.

—And what’s the ending?

—The ending?

—Yes, I mean, it at least must resolve to something.

—Must it though?

—I think the audience would appreciate getting some gratification for their time spent.

—Erm... Well, the frog flies away,—said Vitya, swinging his hand.

—Flies away?

—Flies away, yeah.

—Huh?

—It fucking jumps off this fucking planet into utter space and mysteriously disappears somewhere turning into a Lovecraftian being.

—Wither?

—Wither the fucking space, the far corners of the universe, if you wish, devouring life on other planets, until the whole universe is devoured, and maybe God himself, too. Beelzebufo is a fucking gourmand.

—But the meteorite... how did everything else on the planet go extinct?

—I already told you — no bloody meteorite. Imagine this on a big screen: the desolated Earth, the giant frog jumps up into space, and after its blasting jump, there is a huge aftermath, such a shock wave, the cunt-power explosion, so it scorches all the atmosphere out, and everything living else for the next thousands of years goes to fucking hell.

—Fucking hell...—pondered Illarion Illarionovich.—I got it, I got it, it's even better! It's a metaphor for how capitalism, with Beelzebofo as its avatar, influences climate change and brings us to extinction!

—Oh, you're so fucking tiresome. There will be no metaphors and no

drama. It'll be a massacre, rivers of blood and reptile limbs will be flying out of the screen in the 3-fucking-D and every viewer will be terrified sitting in their panties full of shite.

—And what will be the role for our dinosaur in that film then?

They both looked at the dinosaur and shrugged, Vitya scratched his nape.

—Well, he'll play all the dinosaurs, obviously. We'll do some make-up and such, they'll all look different. Multiple shots, montage, green screen, easy-peasy.

—I thought since we have a real dinosaur, he'd prefer a leading role in an Oscar-worthy film and not yet another B-grade nonsense about blood and guts and nothing else, would he?

—Oh, lovely, off shall I fuck then.

—I mean...

—Let's ask him what he wants, playing a hero in the apocalypse or playing chicken in your drama.

They both turned to the dinosaur again. He, meanwhile, was stunned, his eyes widened, no blinking, hands slightly shaking. He stared at Vitya, switched to Illarion Illarionovich, and opened his mouth, trying to utter something

—Well...?—asked Vitya.—Eaten by a prehistoric devil frog or dramatically killed by kind humans?

Befuddled, the dinosaur looked at them again.

—Do you want a job or what?

—Erm, actually, I thought it was a casting for *Kind Dinosaur 2*.

The Void Travellers

nova-nevedoma.com/the-void-travellers/

(In the year unknown [which possibly could be 2023], unknown aliens from the planet unknown arrived on another unknown planet [which possibly could be Earth]. They were both shocked and fascinated by what they found there, for they would never think of discovering another breed of intelligent species who, however, were nothing like them and had a physical form!)

—Tra-ta-ta-ta. Poo-pey-ty-poo-pey-ty,—said the first alien.

—Bo-ra-bo-ra. Bloo-pey-ty-stoop,—said the second alien.

(The aliens were... shall we say... on another level of intelligence. It was orthogonal to earthlings and rather extradimensional, completely unknown, incomprehensible, unfathomable, cryptic, esoteric, mysterious, intriguing, and fucking funny, too. They weren't even like aliens from "Slaughterhouse-5" or aliens from "Arrival", no, those were the aliens made up by humans in their fictional stories. Our aliens here were nothing alike, they were real aliens.)

—Throo-too-throo-too ya-pe-ty-yap,—said the second alien.

—Doo-doo-doo-doo?—the first alien inquired.

—Doo-doo.

(They were the void travellers. And ugh, ah, uh, ooooooh, ugh—)

[Unfortunately, the first narrator is having some sort of seizures and has to step out to the loo. We're very, very sorry for the inconvenience. Let's switch the scene for a while and listen to the second narrator.]

Pub. Evening. Pints cling, ales splash, the telly roars, patrons try to outspoke each other.

—Mind is the ultimate paradox because when you start looking for it you can't find it. Do you know why?—says Vitya, a stocky and bearded chap who only drinks Russian imperial stouts that are as dark and strong as his soul.

—It's, er... hidden?—answers Illarion Illarionovich, or simply Larik, a gentleman of exquisite structure of body and not less exquisite structure of mind, which do not help much when he's drunk.

—No, Larik. It's not hidden.

—Is it visible then?

—It's not visible either.

—Well, then it's hidden, isn't it?

Vitya's growing annoyed.

—It is both, Larik, okay?

—How can it be both, Vitya?

Vitya's growing rather angry.

—That's what paradox means!

—Uh-huh, I see, I see. Interesting. Pretty much intriguing, I'd even say.

—Tell me something, Larik. Can you see your own face?

—You mean can I?

—Yes. Can you?

—Well, I can, if you give me a mirror.

—Can you see it without a mirror?

—In water probably. If it's clean and it's sunny. Or in ale. Look.

Illarion Illarionovich looks inside his foamless pint of extra dry 8% apple cider and smiles to a blurry copy of himself, a copy that has nothing exquisite about it, and has nothing to say to him either.

—Could you see it with no reflection, though?

Cornered by such a reasonable point, in his mind, Illarion Illarionovich steps back and, overtaken by desperate silence, ponders, while his thoughts weave themselves into a tangle.

—On a photo, perhaps, I could, yes.

Vitya's easy to annoy, especially when he's drunk and talking to someone drunk. To Vitya, he is, and everyone is, always drunk, metaphorically.

—Well, right now, not having any of those things. Can you see your own face?

—I can see my nose a little bit. And cheeks perhaps.

—For fuck's sake...

—Oh by the way, what do you think, it's just some inscrutable conundrum for me: do you think it's "for fuck sake" or "for fuck's sake"?

—It's for your sake, Larik.

Bringing a little bit of zen in his thinking, Vitya takes a deep breath (but he just tries to choke a burp), leans towards Illarion Illarionovich, and continues:

—Right now. At this moment. Can you see your own bloody eyes?

The tangle of Illarion Illarionovich's thoughts starts producing weird thinking sounds, akin to scraping or hissing underwater, somewhere very deep, probably like in the Mariana Trench, and then—

[For anyone who was worried, the first narrator is fine! The seizures

have ceased!]

(When the aliens first arrived on Earth from the void, all they could see is a blue planet, because they jumped right from the void in a slightly wrong position in space and not on the Earth directly, which was a shame and they had to travel back to the void, recalculate coordinates there based on their new knowledge, then travel to Earth directly. The reason they could do such a thing, even though not from the first attempt, is the void was (and is, really) everywhere between particles. Particles are, in fact, just the void packaged into funny wrappers, pretty much like candies or biscuits, which, quite amusingly so, makes them simultaneously visible and invisible! Bizarre, innit? So when the aliens discovered they can see the void, they gathered their thoughts and understood that they can see their thoughts too and, frankly, everyone else's thoughts, because thoughts are just electrical impulses [quite reductionist and materialist view, by the way], which were already quite well known to the aliens, for they were representatives of the most advanced civilization in the universe, and as soon they understood they could see thoughts and pretty much everything, including, of course, but not limited to, the void, they started developing a device they would wear on their gooey void bodies, the device that would allow them to void-travel!)

—No, Vitya, I reckon I can't see them, unless...

—Unless fucking what?

—I was just teasing you. No, Vitya. I can't see them. You're right.

—Good then, I'm happy for you, Larik. It's just lovely, innit?

—It is actually. Right.

—Now, imagine this situation.

—Uh-huh.

—Your mind is an eye.

—Uh-huh.

—And your mind-eye can see things like a normal eye can.

—Uh-huh, reasonable so far.

—So, if your mind is an eye, can it see itself, the mind?

Rolling his eyes, Illarion Illarionovich indulges into heavy thinking, making various thinking sounds, until a thought is produced.

—I suppose, considering all we discussed, my answer would be no. My mind wouldn't see itself.

—Exactly. Let's have another pint for this groundbreaking discovery.

—But wait, what does it see then?

—Anything and everything else but not itself.

The music in the pub changes to some psychedelic ambience. Quite

erie and hypnotic.

(The void-travel device, called in the void travellers' language Boo-boo-goo-ta-ra-ta-ta-too-4-50-1732-2-poopy-poo, wasn't invented instantly because instancy implies at least some juxtaposition with time and speed of its flow. It could take a few nanoseconds or a few petayears, if we speak in human terms, but for gooey void creatures, it happened all at the same time, for inside the void, there's no time, hence to travel to the human universe, to the universe where time does exist, at least to some weird extent, defying the principles of linearity of time and the principle of forwardness, it has to be considered when calculating the precisest coordinates. They were rather befuddled and their first attempts (though how can you have concepts of first and second or third or fourth or any ordinal numerals in chronology (which is by the way a science that studies how events actually occur, occurred, will occur, in human perception and not the actual physical time that's to humans a line divided into smaller segments) if you don't even have such a concept at all, altogether, unscrupulously? [that's a big question, I'd say, it's too much of a question, a fabulous brainfuck of sorts]) Not sure already where this sentence is going... Ah, yes! Okay, khm, khm. They were rather befuddled and their first attempts were a kerfuffle. I think if you boil a kettle for more than you should, meaning that when the water is boiling already and you keep boiling it, it'll evaporate! Marvellous! The minerals, such as calcium, would start to separate (pretty much a chemical divorce with dire consequences) and create deposits on the walls of the kettle, and the walls, now covered in what is called "lime". By the way, lime is good in cocktails,

and it is, apart from the lemon, of course, probably the only juice worth adding to your cocktail. How bizarre, O how bizarre. How—)

[Amidst a universal silence, a melancholic piano melody starts playing. Familiar voices whisper.]

—Blip-blop-blib, zib-zab-zob! Toodle-oo, tra-la-la?

—Gleep-gloop-glop, gloop-glop-gleep! Whirr-whizz-whoop,
zizzle-zazzle?

—Zab-zib-zob! Fizzle-fazzle-fuzzle, twiddle-twaddle-tweedle?

—Ah, gleep-glop-gloop, zib-zab-zob. Tickle-tackle-tockle,
bingle-bangle-bungle!

—Tootle-teetle-tattle, gloop-glop-gleep. Bibble-bobble-bibble,
zobble-zibble-zabble?

—Glop-gleep-gloop, zib-zab-zob! Jingle-jangle-juggle,
wibble-wobble-wooble.

—Zib-zab-zob, gleep-glop-gloop! Dibble-dabble-doodle,
flibble-flabble-floodle.

—Gloop-gleep-glop, zibble-zobble-zabble. Twizzle-twazzle-tweezle,
dribble-drabble-dreezle.

—Oh, zib-zab-zob! Tingle-tangle-tungle, bizzle-bazzle-buzzle.

—Gleep-glop-gloop! Mingle-mangle-mungle, wizzle-wazzle-wuzzle.

—Zib-zab-zob, gloop-glop-gleep! Pibble-pabble-poodle,
rizzle-razzle-raddle.

—Ah, gloop-gleep-glop! Nibble-nabble-noodle, kizzle-kazzle-koodle.

—Zib-zab-zob! Riffle-raffle-roodle, zibble-zabble-zoodle.

—Gleep-glop-gloop, zib-zab-zob. Tickle-tackle-toodle,
fizzle-fazzle-foodle.

[Someone enters the room and breaks the piano. Oh no, how terrible and unwise of them. We should call the police.]

(Khm-khm. On the planet unknown, the void gooies discovered something humans call “consciousness”, or “conscience”. They weren’t quite sure how to pronounce that word and spell it and what it meant. Perhaps, they made a mistake, the same mistake many fictional aliens do, and “landed” in the English speaking country. In the void, there’s no such thing as “uncertainty” or “obscurity” or “randomness” or “incomprehensibility”, for the void is a uniform mass of nothing. The void, in a way, is utterly voidful. It can’t even be called uniform and it can’t even be called mass. [Actually, hang on, I’m not sure how this worldbuilding works anymore.] What? [If the void is voidful, how can anything, including void creatures, the gooey aliens, even originate it in?] They are, erm, well, let me think... That’s actually a dumb question. They are, of course, God’s creations. [How?] He, or she, or it, is, erm, quite

omnipotent, a creature possessing an ultimate power being able to handle anything, including the void, like plasticine.)

—But Vitya, I don't understand.

—What?

—Well, a lot of things, but now I'm particularly puzzled with, erm, perception capabilities of the mind, in particular, what you said, basically, the mind cannot see itself, which I kind of agree with, but if it can see anything and everything else, can it see other minds?

—Of course.

—Can your mind see my mind?

—Totally.

—And can my mind see your mind?

—Abso-fuckin-lutely, Larik.

—Hm. Uh-huh!

A muffled squawk resonates through the pub so loudly that the other customers turn round to look at Illarion Illarionovich — that's his "eureka!" sound. Bartender frowns and accidentally spills foam on the floor.

—So, if, by your logic, my mind can see your mind and your mind can

see my mind.

—Correct.

—Then can't they like, erm, have an intelligent discussion and tell each other about each other, or maybe paint each other or whatever form of depiction of objects they could use, so they could finally see themselves?

—I don't think so.

—Uh-huh... .. I wonder why it can't be the case.

—Your name should be Hilarion Hilarionovich. I thought you're smart, Larik, but it seems I was wrog. It's simple. Your mind can't see itself therefore it can't describe itself to the fullest therefore in a dialogue with another mind your mind won't be able to convey its essence to my mind.

—And your mind?

—The same thing. They would only see a wee bit, merely an opening act in a circus when boring clowns come out. Imagine it was just fucking clowns, Larik.

—Oh that wouldn't be fun, would it?

—It wouldn't, Larik.

—Uh-huh. Hmm... That's what I thought. Uh-huh, okay. Well, well, well.

Larik's "well" echoes into the distance.

(The introduction of the concept of zero to humanity was a funny encounter. Once the void travellers arrived on Earth and discovered—

Oh, maybe it wasn't 2023 after all, but who cares, for the void travellers it didn't (doesn't, will not) matter, for the void is all encompassing and omnitemely. The void travellers thought that if they showed humans the void, they would be able to build a bridge between two civilisations and share delusional knowledge, photos and artworks of naked individuals, amusing and nonsensical pictures, and other integral components of modern communication. There, in the universe, between the matter and the void, like in a happily married couple, would reign love, a utopia. High aspirations, you'd say. You wouldn't be wrong. But in reality, it was rather like giving a monkey a typewriter and expecting it to yield Shakespeare in an hour. [Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind, And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.] Zero, a round hole of a number, numerical equivalent of a shrug, a placeholder where something could be but chose not to, in the gaping middle containing the void in itself, should've taught people what was the void so they could look into it and the void would look back, there would have occurred a cosmic bond, and perhaps some spicy sexy thing between the matter and void, between the mind and the mental vacuum, but instead humans started using zero to count things that weren't there.)

—Okay-okay, so, Vitya, if the mind can see anything but the mind, does that anything include the void?

—The void?

—Yes, the void, you know, that thing that is nothing and doesn't exist.

—Fuck no, obviously. How would that be possible?

—I just wonder, if you can think of it, try to imagine it at least as a hole, is it really the void?

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