

An underwater photograph showing two large sharks swimming towards the camera. The water is clear blue, and many small fish are visible in the background. A piece of driftwood or a branch is visible in the upper right corner.

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Gravitation
Stories

Gravitation

1.

‘I can’t understand you, friend,’ Harry said, ‘she left you, having played away for the whole year as it proved later, but you’re cheering. Wow, I wouldn’t be able to do as you’re doing, for sure.’

‘It is not the most difficult puzzle,’ Mike replied smiling, ‘everything’s simple: my Bonnie did not leave me, it was a girl who has the same name and looks similar. But, as it turned out, I didn’t know her. And, the girl with such approach to life as hers isn’t completely interesting to me. My true and kind Bonnie remains in my heart; nothing happened to her. There’s no doubt I’ll meet her again in my life.’

Then, the lad laughed loudly.

‘Why are you laughing??,’ his friend asked amazed.

‘Well, simply, there’re some interesting moments in this story.’

‘So? What exactly?,’ Harry looked at his friend curiously.

‘Well now, when I walk past a deer at the zoo, I realize they must be very jealous of the size of my horns.’

Having said this, both lads burst into laughter.

‘So, you rock!’ Harry reflected, catching his breath finally. ‘I couldn’t be like that if I were in your shoes, for sure.’

‘I hope that your nice Sue will never give you a reason to check this,’ his friend replied in a serious tone.

‘I hope she won’t too,’ Harry responded.

2.

Having swayed treacherously on the edge of bread and butter, a slice of cheese fell right onto her jeans.

‘Misfortunes never come alone,’ Betty thought philosophically and, having sent the guilty slice into her mouth, stretched her arm to take a table napkin.

The girl sat on her bathing towel on her favourite sandy beach. Today, she was watching seven hundred and twenty fourth part of a wonderful TV series titled ‘Waves’. What made her especially happy was that the director and script writer of the film would always manage to create a continuation for it, even right at the time of her coming.

‘Hey, girlie! You’ve got a two-seat towel, in fact,’ she heard a voice near her.

What could one say? She hoped that the words her loved young man will address to her someday will be completely

different, and she will recognize them at once. Betty did not doubt that for a slightest moment.

‘I’m only a mirage,’ she replied not raising her head. ‘Your water well is somewhere further along the beach.’

After that, Betty heard the sound of steps going away from her which made her pleased.

The girl is twenty five years of age but she had not met her other half in life. To be more precise, she had always felt it inside her, but it had not happened for her yet to see it live, with arms and legs, a cheery and kind look. Her parents and girlfriends have dinned her ears that she was now at a serious age and it’s time for her to start a family.

Nevertheless, Betty did not understand the meaning of the words: ‘it is time to...’. She associated it with a nasty alarm clock going off, a school bell ringing or a train leaving. Let those trains come and go whenever they want, what does that have to do with her?

‘Lassie, you’ve got a two-seat towel,’ she heard a new voice near her.

Betty sighed. It was just not a coincidence that the cheese had fallen on her jeans today.

3.

Grouper would not give way to divers for the world. A huge one, weighing nearly half a tonne, was looking calmly and even with some pity at two awkward, bubbling creatures. The friends

gave its due to its temperance having taken several photos and swam further.

Ahead, an enormous shoal of trevally fish was waiting for them. It broke beautifully, as if it were a cloud, in front of Mike and Harry and came together densely several meters behind them.

4.

Later that day in the evening, the friends settled themselves at the table on the rear deck of a yacht. The clouds in the sky started sparkling with all their beauty as the sun almost disappeared, dropping below the horizon.

‘Certainly, I know you’re an optimist, friend! But sometimes, it’s hard for me to believe that you ain’t angry at Bonny at all,’ Harry said thoughtfully. ‘How d’you manage to do that? She’s been fooling you for so long.’

‘Not me,’ the friend smiled in response, ‘herself.’

‘How’s that?’

‘Well, I thought that she had been faithful to me and that’s why I was happy.’ Mike replied. ‘And, she’d been deceiving me, therefore, she had been unhappy. A deceiving person can never be happy and I feel pity for her with all my heart. But, that is what Bonny has chosen. She isn’t my property and she has the right to act as she wants to.’

‘Hum, don’t you feel sorry for your love?’

‘Love?,’ Mike shrugged his shoulders, ‘of course not. Nothing can happen to love. Simply, my love has returned to my heart, but it will surely come out of there when the time comes.’

‘And Bonny’s love?,’ Harry asked with interest.

‘Oh, how do I know what *rollercoaster* she’s got in her head for that word.’ His friend replied with a smile making Harry laugh cheerily. ‘True love is simple, open and honest, if it isn’t, it’s fake then’.

‘How’s that?’

‘Well, if some fungus forms on this slice of bread, will you really want to eat it?’

‘Well, if it’s the last slice on the ship amid an open ocean...,’ Harry laughed.

‘Right.’ his friend agreed. ‘However, Bonny ain’t *the last slice*. Apparently pal, you haven’t walked at our beach for long at noon, have you...?’

They laughed together cheerily again.

‘Well, friend, it seems you’ve read too many beautiful and romantic fairytales during your childhood.’

‘Aha, they’re still lying in a suitcase on the balcony where Bonny carried them out to once.’

At that moment, Mike slapped himself on his forehead.

‘You’re a genius, friend! Now, I’ve figured out why she didn’t like the fairytales at all...’

That day, Mike was wandering slowly along the beach. It was raining lightly and nobody was around. Moreover, he was not bothered much by the weather: the rain was warm and the ocean is always beautiful under any condition. He even felt slightly happy to be walking in such place alone.

Suddenly, Mike saw a silhouette of someone sitting on the sand far ahead. The person looked like they were well-covered by the raincoat.

‘Hum. I wonder what cretin likes a rainy beach too?’

Mike decided to move closer; he started to look at the person intently. It seemed that it was a girl. As the lad was treading on the sand, his heart started beating faster.

‘And what’s that?,’ he wondered.

It was quite apparent that the silhouette in the raincoat attracted him.

‘Curious,’ the lad could only think and went on.

Having moved very closely, he stopped. Right, it was a girl: her small pretty nose could be seen under the hood. Mike was sure that she heard his steps but the girl had not turned her head towards him even.

Mike smiled broadly.

‘Excuse me, certainly I understand that you’re likely a local mirage,’ he said cheerily, ‘but I need a water well and there’s no one else around to simply ask.’

The girl shuddered. A moment later, she took her hood off and Mike saw an enchanting face. They both looked at each other – silently. Interested Betty was looking intently into Mike’s kind and cheery eyes and he peered into her romantic and very warm ones.

‘Is he my other half?’ Betty’s heart began to beat from happiness, but at the same time, some doubts haunted her.

She decided to ask a test question, just in case.

‘How many people should sit on my towel?,’ she enquired.

‘Instruction for a towel is always written by its owner only,’ the lad replied smiling, shrugging his shoulders.

The girl rose to her feet and stretched her hand cautiously. At that instant, a happy smile on her face shone so brightly that it overlit all the rainy weather around there.

‘Betty!’ she introduced herself.

* * *

The Year 2033

‘Dear,’ Harry looked at a voluminous hologram of his wife with a tint of reproach, ‘you promised to return yesterday!’

The image of a pretty blonde-haired woman in the air fidgeted a little.

‘Um, you see, dear, I’ve held on a little longer at my mom’s home,’ she began justifying herself guiltily, but instantly, her expression changed and she looked at her husband cheerily, ‘but I sent my phantom yesterday so that you would not get bored...’

‘What phantom?’ Harry wondered sincerely. ‘I haven’t received anything.’

The blonde raised her brows not understanding anything and turned to a screen that gleamed in the air. Having made a couple of movements with her hands in front of her, she covered her mouth frightened.

‘Oh! I haven’t updated antivirus on it and yesterday, my phantom was intercepted by some hackers,’ she giggled embarrassed, ‘maniacs... But don’t worry, dear, I’ll do another one right now and send it to you.’

Harry smiled contentedly.

‘Alright, darling, there’s nothing to worry about,’ he waved to her, ‘I’m waiting for the phantom and for you to return soon.’

His wife smiled in response and then, her voluminous image dissolved in the air slowly.

* * *

The intellect

Doctor Henry Lebinsky was walking cheerfully to his home, not noticing puddles on the pavement. That day was a special one for him: the project – ‘Artificial thought’ – that he had been directing for more than six years produced a significant result again.

It had been several months that he and his collaborators experimented with prominent historical personalities and crucial historical events. And on that day, their artificial intellect made the absolutely right decision for the events that happened eight hundred years ago. It corrected the actions of one famous conqueror in the big battle. In those aspects where – according to the opinion of the historians – this commander had made mistakes, he acted more correctly. That day, Henry had something to be proud of.

In general, the idea of simulating turning points in the history of humankind was not a genuine one. Many institutes that conducted researches on the problems of creating artificial intellect experimented in this field. Although, Henry had not yet heard that anyone besides him had serious success in this field of research.

The artificial intellect. The very thought about it made his heart palpitate. Certainly, many other people were concerned with this subject too. How many films has humankind made on this topic already! And here he was, professor Henry Lebinsky, standing right on the edge of one of the greatest discoveries.

The doctor remembered the joy that shone on the faces of all his department's co-workers; they even drank Champagne to celebrate such success that day.

To be honest though, the project was very unstable. Very often, a series of experiments following some outstanding success ended in failure. Despite that, professor Lebinsky was a rare optimist. He knew well that the way to great discoveries lies only through great work. And day by day, he – together with his collaborators – made the project 'Artificial thought' advance towards victory.

* * *

A team of loaders were carrying out some furniture at the entrance of the apartment building he lived in, loading them onto the truck. Deciding to wait until they finished, the professor stood

by the house wall. He looked absent-minded either at his surroundings or at the people working. Suddenly, one armchair caught his eye. Henry peered at the furniture and it dawned on him that the furniture were all from his apartment.

‘Hey lads, where are you fetching it all from?,’ he asked.

‘Apartment 47B,’ a worker who was older than his assistants replied, ‘something wrong?’

‘No, nothing at all,’ the professor replied somewhat lost and having pushed through to the entrance, he flew up the staircase to the third floor.

Elsa, his wife, was standing in the corridor giving orders.

‘Darling!,’ Henry addressed her, ‘what does it mean?’

His spouse turned her head to him slowly.

‘Nothing special – I am leaving, And *your dear*, Henry, for a long time has only been your work. I hope that some of your intellectual creation which is more tolerant will take my place soon. I am sorry, but I am tired of such life. Don’t worry: I’ve taken my furniture only.’

Elsa turned to the workers again.

‘You can’t do that to me...,’ the professor began to speak.

‘I’ve done it already,’ his wife replied and, having given a parting glance to her husband, walked slowly to the staircase, ‘and, don’t try to find me.’

The professor was left standing at the door silently watching the workers coming out of his flat. He heard the sound of

heelpieces distancing from him at the flight of stairs. He felt very bad at that moment. His control over life was lost completely.

* * *

Sometime later, professor Lebinsky was driving on a hilly road at night. It had taken him exactly one hour of thinking earlier in a bar across his street to realize that it was better not to stay at home that night. The only place where he could obtain mental equilibrium was at his mother's house; this would require about two hours of driving through the mountains.

Having stopped to make a short telephone call, he got into his car and soon drove out to the motorway. Lebinsky normally liked to drive at an unhurried pace, but that day, he desperately wanted to find himself sooner at home where he had always been loved and understood well. So, Henry would often press the accelerator pedal beyond all measure.

'Don't try to find me,' these words of Elsa were constantly spinning in his head like a gramophone record, and that was after they had happily lived together for twenty years, or so he thought! From time to time, the professor would shed long, forgotten tears.

'Don't try to find me.'

During one of such moments, taking his hand off his wet eyes, it occurred to the professor instantly that he had lost control again. This time, over the road.

As if it were a slow-motion playback, he stared at speedometer disc showing 120 km/h at a sharp turn or at glaze ice on the asphalt. Then, being absolutely calm, he observed his car break

through a road fence, bursting above a dark abyss. Sometime later, the light in his eyes faded.

* * *

‘Wake up, my little son, above the roofs already sun,’ a soft voice near him sang his favourite children’s rhyme.

‘Mother!,’ Henry lifted himself up slightly, opening his eyes.

What he saw around him afterwards kept him silent for a while. Due to his effort of lifting himself up, he began to rise above the ground, above a place which much resembled a wonderful botanical garden – to be more precise. Everything, as far as the eye could see was flooded with flowers and plants of beautiful forms. For some reason, Henry continued rising higher and higher, approaching the top of the tallest trees there.

Some white-coloured winged figure flew up to him and, taking him by his hand, drew him downwards.

‘Careful, Henry, the laws here are slightly different,’ he heard the same voice utter warmly.

Henry was silent. Looking around in amazement, he tried to recognize at least something there. But, his mind of a professor would come only up with blank spaces and question marks. So, it continued for a long time. Finally, Henry focused his attention on a light face with very kind eyes.

‘Am I dead?,’ he quietly spoke the only conclusion that came to his mind.

‘Not quite,’ the kind face replied.

Hardly had the professor touched the ground, he heard the warm voice again.

‘Look.’

Instead of the garden, something resembling a big screen with a voluminous image in it appeared in front of Henry. He began to watch an unusual film screening on it. Some blue car at high speed had not turned right and, having broken through a road fence, flew out from the cliff. It was his undersense that made the professor recognize his own automobile.

In an instant, the picture changed and the professor saw a hospital room. Someone was lying in the middle of it heavily bandaged all over the body. The patient was connected with several thin tubes to medical units with flashing lights. Henry looked more intently.

‘It’s me,’ he said with a more affirmative tone, rather than a doubtful one.

The light face with the kind eyes nodded.

‘Will I die?,’ asked the professor a while later.

The light person with wings shrugged his shoulders smiling.

‘It is what you choose yourself, Henry,’ he replied, ‘but only after you know something.’

A moment later, the screen lit in front of the professor again.

* * *

Several hours later when the film was over, Henry found himself sitting on the grass with his head resting on his arms, silent.

‘So it means that there is God and Paradise,’ he spoke out finally. ‘What a fool I have been! I have never taken this seriously.’

The light man with a slightly saddened smile threw up his hands.

‘It is so,’ he said, ‘the good news is that you have remained a kind and honest man.’

‘Is it important?,’ asked the professor.

‘In general, it is the only thing that is important,’ the white man smiled.

Henry thought it over for a moment.

‘Following the logic of what I have seen, you must be an angel,’ he said looking at his interlocutor.

‘Right, it was not in vain that you have been given the role of a professor!,’ the angel replied, after which they both laughed out loudly.

‘Yes, I am your angel, my name is Elios.’

‘Elios?,’ Henry shuddered, ‘when I was a child, I had a kitten named so.’

The angel laughed.

‘Well, we, the angels, like to play jokes at times. As a result, my dear ward pronounced my name ten times a day not even suspecting it.’

The professor smiled broadly. After that, he looked into his angel’s eyes intently.

‘Elios, I have got a feeling that I should come to know something more important.’

‘It is so,’ the angel nodded, ‘you should know something about the artificial intellect you have been working on so hard for so long.’

‘The reason why my Elsa left me,’ Henry dropped his head.

‘Well, don’t worry much about that,’ the angel smiled.

The screen flashed once more and the professor saw his wife run into his hospital room and, having taken him by his hand, wept aloud. There was no sound during this scene, though everything could be understood without it.

‘Elsa!,’ professor spoke out with tears rolling down his eyes from happiness. ‘She has come back.’

‘She loves you very much,’ the angel said quietly, ‘but with your work, you have been putting her far off for a long time.’

Henry stared at the screen and began to feel the way his life began, acquiring some sense again. Soon, the screen went out. Sometime later, he recalled the angel’s words.

‘The artificial intellect, what is wrong with it, Elios?,’ he asked in a serious tone.

‘Everything is wrong, Henry,’ said the angel and looked intently at the scientist, ‘your life, my life, your body, my body, your mind, my mind. All these things can be created only by God – our Creator and Father. No one else can do these.’

‘No one?,’ Henry asked slowly once more, ‘but why?’

The angel laughed out.

‘Do you really want to know why nuts of an automobile cannot create an automobile? And why namely a constructor is needed for it here?,’ Elios smiled.

Henry slowly thought over what he had heard.

‘But, we manage to obtain some success in that, at times...’

‘What did you obtain exactly? Copying conduct of a human being who with his wars brought disaster to thousands of people?.’ The angel laughed ironically. ‘In fact, beyond the limits of a little earth, only love and kindness have value universally, while such *great men* have a completely different future after their death and for a very long time.’

‘Indeed?,’ Henry wondered.

‘Would you like to have a look at it?’

‘If I may,’ the professor nodded.

* * *

The screen appeared in the air again, this time consisting of grey and black tones. There, in its center, a little dark creature was

moving that reminded Henry of an animation troll. The creature was constantly looking around afraid.

‘Who is this?,’ the professor asked the Angel.

‘Your «great» conqueror,’ he replied.

Henry choked,.

‘How horrible he looks...’

‘After death, every human being looks commensurate to what he has done in life,’ the angel explained.

At that moment, another creature of a much bigger size sprang out from behind a stone and rushed to seize the little one with a cry of joy. The latter shrieked and, having freed itself, broke off to the side. Although in several dozen steps, another big creature sprang out from behind a stone again and attacked.

‘How long has he been living like this?,’ Henry enquired in a quiet voice.

‘For almost eight hundred years,’ the angel replied, ‘it is not only him, but all the others who committed evil on earth. Everything bad should inevitably return to a human being after death – it is the law – only if he does not repent in his physical life.’

‘Oh, my God!,’ the professor could only utter.

‘Exactly. And you are trying to copy his intellect,’ Elios smiled, ‘it is not intellects that you should copy, but love, kindness and honesty. As you can see yourself, only these have value beyond the limits of the earth. Many much loved children of Father could not even read in their earthly lives.’

‘Oh dear,’ Henry could only say again.

The screen had gone out for a while, but the professor still kept looking at it for a very long time.

‘Elios,’ he spoke out finally, ‘why are you showing me all these? As far as I know, it is not custom to do so here.’

The angel looked into the eyes of the scientist intently.

‘You are very kind and honest,’ he said in a soft voice, ‘and I managed to get permission from Father to help you figure some things out.’

‘Thank you,’ Henry spoke out in a low voice, ‘thank you.’

‘It was a pleasure for me to do this for you,’ the angel replied and then added, ‘well, now you know the main things. The choice is up to you: you can remain here forever or you can return to earth again.’

The professor rose to his feet slowly and wandered around the garden without haste. Sometime later, he walked back to Elios.

‘May I have a look at my wife once more?,’ he asked.

The angel nodded. The screen shone in front of him again. Elsa was sitting on a chair by the bed in the hospital room. She was holding the hand of the patient with both hands. Tears were still rolling down her face while her lips moved as she whispered something warmly.

‘I will return, if you don’t mind.’

The angel nodded.

‘And,’ Henry paused for a moment, ‘maybe, I will manage to do something useful on earth indeed.’

‘Keep in mind that nobody will believe a single word of yours’, the angel pronounced slowly, ‘generally, it will be very difficult for you to make the things moving there.’

‘That we will see, yet,’ Henry’s eyes shone with an ardour of a true scientist.

‘Well then, good luck, my dear,’ Angel Elios said warmly. ‘We all will wait for you after your earthly life.’

* * *

The patient’s hand suddenly began to interlock with his wife’s hand – tenderly and tightly.

The Butterfly

A girl was happily playing on the screen of her favourite tablet with her fingers. Her rabbit, Sindy, was surpassing obstacles cunningly, avoiding various monsters. At times, the baby would take a short pause to drink some juice, and then return to her computer game.

Several minutes later, the tablet made congratulatory sounds upon reaching the third level. The girl laughed from happiness and began to clap her hands. After that, she stretched cutely and looked towards the window.

Instantly, the girl froze: an enormous butterfly was right on the glass of the window. The child turned off her tablet and began scrambling awkwardly out from the children's chair she had been sitting on. Soon, she trod – as in a child's wobbly manner – to the window. The butterfly was still sitting on the glass: big, beautiful, with large yellow wings and long black feelers. The child smiled at it cheerily and the butterfly moved its feelers in response in a friendly manner.

The girl had been looking at it for some time in fascination; then, she decided to take a closer look at the newcomer. To do this, she placed her fingers against the glass and began to spread them like she did with her tablet. But for some reason, the butterfly would not spread itself bigger. The child stood thinking it over for a moment and repeated the action. Nothing changed, the butterfly would not become bigger in size.

The girl stood still – bewildered. In a brisk moment, she intuitively clapped on the glass with her hand. The butterfly flapped its wings gracefully and took off towards the forest.

The wonder-stricken, open-mouthed child stood there for long watching it fly away.

Cat and Whale

A big red cat was sitting on the sofa staring at the tip of his tail very much surprised. Sometimes, his tail would shudder slightly which made the tomcat even more surprised, so it continued for a long time.

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Jeff has never been tired of watching whales. He greatly loved marveling at these wonderful giants of the sea. And, thank goodness, he had such opportunity: each year, a big group of whales would stay in the bay not far from his home for several months. Therefore, the young man would often take his boat on the trailer to the sea shore there. His eight-meter *Red Cat* was not big, but it was quite a comfortable and reliable vessel.

That morning, the waters of Harvey Bay were unbelievably calm, except slight rippling which spoiled the impression of looking at a vast, endless water-mirror.

Jeff steered slowly to stop at his favourite location where the whales would normally swim by. The depth in that place reached twenty metres. He dropped the anchor and turned off the boat's engine. Then, the young man took his thermos filled with aromatic coffee and went to the bow.

Having glanced at the anchor rope that went down into the blue sea, he smiled cheerfully as the day's underwater visibility was

perfectly fine. Having sat in his favorite place on the deck, he unscrewed the cup and poured himself a drink.

About fifteen minutes later, the whales appeared in the distance. First, Jeff saw their glistening black backs and spouts through his binoculars. A little later, their sounds reached him. Having come to the rear deck of the boat, he took a wetsuit that had been drying on the rope and wore it. After that, he took the mask, snorkel and flippers from the box.

Despite their enormous size, the whales can be frightened quite easily. That is why Jeff had to be very careful: he had to avoid making any noise. So, at that moment, he switched off all electronics including the radio, and slid quietly off the rear deck into the water. Having swum gently along the side of the boat to the anchor rope, he grasped it and waited.

Within minutes, the whales approached the boat closely. Jeff deeply breathed in about a dozen times and began diving, creeping by the rope. At the depth of nearly eight metres, he glanced at the diver's computer he had and stopped.

This time, the whales swam past very closely. There were three species: two adult whales and one baby-whale, some seven meters long. Jeff, who could easily hold his breath at this depth for a couple of minutes, turned his head slowly and watched these gracious sea giants with excitement. The two big whales came from both sides five metres away, then went further, but the small one slowed down his pace. It swam right to the young man and held still. They looked intently at each other for a few moments.

Soon, Jeff felt that it was a good time for him to take a breath. He warmly waved the little whale goodbye and began to ascend by the rope.

Having reached the deck, Jeff watched the glistening black backs and spaying fountains disappear. Then, he began to heave the anchor up. It was time for him to return to his dryland pets.

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The big red tomcat was still surprised at his tail jerking when he suddenly heard the entrance door click. Instantly forgetting about the tail, he leapt to the floor and began to purr, preparing to meet his host. The tomcat felt as sure as ever that the return would result in a tasty fish.

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