

HELL'S BOOK

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Death is already here...

I woke up in my grandmother's room. Why am I here? Sometimes people may not remember insignificant things. It's okay if you drink too much.

To say good morning? Mother is asleep as usual. Who else can I wish a good morning? I have no soul. The world is dark for me; sometimes it just disappears into the darkness of my mind. Occasionally, my darkness can be destroyed by light, and it will disappear for a short time. But this does not mean that it will not return again. I went to the bathroom.

Calmly finishing my business, I stared at my phone as usual. Sometimes I can burn darkness with such things. But they are not light.

It is not known how much time has passed. Mom woke up, and I heard the daily questions: "did you eat anything?", "when did you get up?" Answering "no" and "I don't know", I stared back at the phone.

Sometimes I go into my memories. They all create darkness, but in some darkness you can see rays of light. And some of the memories just disappeared. Where to? I do not know. It's not worth it to be afraid, because fear creates a cage for the mind.

Am I insane? What's with my mind? Am I drunk?

These questions sometimes pop into my head. There are no answers to them. I tried to forget, but it's too complicated.

Later I ate a little. I don't eat everything completely. I leave the rest. I'm full, but my head is not quite. It needs real light. I wither away and slowly sink into darkness and attempts to find it have never ended in success. I remembered that today I was going to the city center with my mother for her business. And now, I am already on the train of my thoughts, which rush to somewhere, unclear where, having no idea why and for what?

This sound... The paper crumples and the thought turns into yesterday. The sand pours mercilessly. I've gone mad. Fight... Darkness... Blood... BLOOD... Everything is filled with blood... I am in darkness. Before my eyes I see a bloody face. It screams angrily, spraying blood into my face:

– YOUR LIFE TURNED TO HELL! YOU ARE A MISERABLE, PATHETIC IDIOT! YOU ARE NOTHING!

Suddenly the bloody face turns into the face of my mother. I get off the train and fall into darkness. Crying is heard, loud laughter and the sound of burning thoughts. I see a cloak in front of me. Eyes appear in it, begging for help, but it falls. I am selfish; I bring nothing to this world, except darkness. I felt a sharp pain, first in my legs, then throughout my body. I started to burn. A tall figure appeared in front of me. It was him...

Here is my stop. It's time to get out.

Several minutes have passed, maybe even an hour. But time never stops, so, it still goes on. It will go on for a very long time, right up until the very end. Sometimes we have to skip it, trying to reach new moments. Sometimes we try to appreciate it, although it will never have an effect anyway. I don't live in time. It ended long ago for me.

Sometimes darkness itself absorbs light and only a shadow remains from my mind. A shadow that is formed from order and chaos, fire and water, light and darkness, good and evil. But the mind cannot think about what it does not understand. Do you think you get it?

Think again.

Every now and then it would be well for my mind to think a little. All just so that my efforts go into nowhere.

Occasionally, darkness obscures my mind only in moments of weakness. You just have to be strong. It's strange how easy it is to say. But I have no will and strength. I'm just waiting for other circumstances.

My friend Anya died not so long ago. She just went into the abyss. I used to love her. I don't know the cause of her death, but I don't think she will ever return. Perhaps only into my mind. I tried to forget, but it's too complicated.

I wish I could be simpler, but I can't. I have no freedom, in my head the fog merges with darkness and there is no room for anything else.

I had dinner, 2 hours passed and I went to bed.

I never get to sleep IMMEDIATELY. I need at least an hour. It depends on how much darkness I have in my head.

Sometimes I try to fight it. Every so often dreams come to me. Some bring light, some bring darkness. Sometimes, dreams come and go on paper. I had several of these. This is the only source of ideas for me, when the mind can feel freedom for at least a short time. But then the reality boulder will fall on it again. Oh...

What nonsense am I talking about?! Why is it in my mind?!...

I think it's best to just forget. I don't want to remember.

Morning. Light... but not quite enough. Too little. But why...

Darkness. The door twitches ... Something crawls out from behind the door ... A hand... Oh God...



Oh Lord... These creatures came out of nowhere...
Out of... my mind...

They walked slowly towards me...

I closed my eyes. Forget. Forget! FORGET!!!

Do you think this is just a dream? This is just nonsense that you can so easily throw away and move on? BUT THE NIGHTMARE BEGAN.

Better go and eat. Yes, some light brings darkness.

No, I have no mental problems, at least those that either I or someone else knows about. I don't smoke, I don't drink.

Let's get to the point.

Where do I look for the light? I will try to come to the easiest solution. I'll just think about where it might be. Closing my eyes, I begin to think as far as I can. Well, I'll open...

Where am I? It looks like a hospital ... What an irony. Well...

The building had long been abandoned, the walls were rusted through and there was a metallic stench in the air. I was in something more like a lobby than something else. To my left was the front door; to the right was the reception desk. It looks like no one has been here for years. Does this mean that...

I caught a glance at the corpse under my feet. Previously, I did not give any importance to it, I simply did not notice. But now it moved. It... It got up!

I had no weapon... I looked around in search of something improvised, but by the look of the situation it seemed that the corpse was stronger than the building itself. It ran at me.

The corpse began to gnaw me, I tried to fight back. I thought about the complete nonsense of what was happening, perhaps in the hope of forgetting and seeing the light. But no. The darkness began to thicken, and I was being tormented by long-gone past. Past.

I gathered my strength and fought back. The corpse flew from me to the wall and crumbled. I thought the best thing would be to just keep searching.

In fact, I myself did not understand what had happened. Turning around, I went to the front door. But it was locked.

"Perhaps someone clearly does not want me to leave," I thought. Looking in the mirror, I did not see myself, only some hobo, beaten by fate and tortured by the shameless and impartial life.

Words flashed through my head. "Ward №19".

Sometimes my imagination surpasses itself. It becomes so strong that it comes out. It's for the best.

In the last... Hell with it, no one has ever loved or loves me. Everyone just doesn't give a damn about me. Doesn't! Everyone! I am constantly alone. Some may say that it's all because of me. Idiots, not at all. Nobody just understands me.

What's happening?

Okay, I remembered the words again and went to look for the 19th ward. I shouldn't waste any time. Approaching the staircase, I saw the plan of the building. It was also rusty and the framed paper decayed, but I saw that rooms 1-30 were on the second floor.

Going up to the 2nd floor, I found the ward and went there. There was a table, a bed, a window and light... It was coming from the window. Yes, yes, yes! More light... More...

I am falling into the abyss. I fell, but I'm still falling. Down, down and down. Into the darkness.

– Only five days. That much has been given to you. You cannot deny it for all eternity. Not long, right? Believe it or not, the end will come soon. Everything will die, time, light and darkness, which are so dear to you, love and hate, which you will never know, fear and courage, which you will not understand, you and me...

DAY 1

I... woke up again? How long can this go on?

Days, months, eternity... Until the end. But I will exist. I can't just go away.

I got up. Again. Washed myself. Everything is as usual. Suddenly I hear the phone ringing. I already know who it is. Vanya.

– Hello, Zhenya?

– Hello.

– We've killed the Wall of Flesh!

– ...

– ZHENYA! ZHENYA! Borya! Shoo! hoorayhooray... Zhenya, I got ge... registered at Happy Wheels.

– Me too.

– Got i... go-ot e-e-et.

I turned off the microphone. While I was just lying in the phone, Vanya just rattled in it. Why do I need him at all? Why does he need me? He does not allow me to live in peace... Although... I do not live.

Vanya finished, we said goodbye and I hung up... Lord... What an egoist I am. As a result, I will not go unpunished. My life has turned into hell, why should I turn other lives into hell? The two entities in front of me gnaw each other's throats, contradicting one another, gouging out their eyes and tearing apart

their jaws. I close my eyes and try to see the light. They remain before the eyes. I can't just get it all together and forget. Why is it so hard?

Suddenly the image disappears, and I see a figure in front of me in the distance. I do not understand. I cannot see what I do not understand. I cannot think about it. Go away! Don't you dare invade my life again!

Anya? Was that you? I'm going crazy. And now...

– Come in, they are waiting for you.

The doors opened. There was a mirror in the room ...

– Come in. That's a command.

I came in. There was one more person with me. Faceless, lifeless, like a mannequin, he mechanically moved forward to the mirror. He stopped two meters from him. His head turned in my direction. The door slammed shut in the back.

I turned around and walked over to the mirror. Looking into it, I did not see the mannequin, but only a man behind my back. He put his hand on my shoulder. I didn't feel it, I just saw it.

– Soon the end will be. - He said and his lips spread into a thin and small grin. I heard a roar...

Siren. Anxiety. I'm still here. Why? There must be an explanation... This is illogical. Everything was made

up by me. This is my world. So... I can make my own light!

Here it is... yes...

– NO! – I heard.

– Who are you?

– It's me.

Everything around went dark.

– No no! I can think of light! Stop contradicting me! Go away!

– You cannot come up with something that you do not understand, which is does not exist...

I have not woken up, no... I have not slept for a long time. Nothing ever happened. There were no vain attempts and ineffectual impulses. All this time there was nothing. Nobody. I opened the door from the room. The image of the corridor became more and more blurred until it was an abyss. I stopped paying attention.

Dinner. Soup. Everything is as usual. Darkness... I have already forgotten about it, no matter how difficult it may seem.

Just forget? This will not destroy the darkness.

This is my usual day. Nothing happens, and nothing happened to me. I play the piano. Etude, scales, ensemble with myself. Also, everything is as usual.

After another thoughtless play of the etude, I took valerian and paranoia pills. There is no one to ask me about my preferences. I am alone in this world and I am the only one. It has always been and will soon be so forever.

Hmm ... I remember writing something valuable, and now I'm writing this nonsense.

Here, I stupidly sit at the computer and just waste my time. I have nothing to do. I forgot about the darkness, and even remembering how I left it doesn't return it. It will be back. Everything has its time...

The computer began to beep. Everything went dark. The light went out. Soon the computer turned off. I'm lost. "Everything has its time"... My life is full of irony and sarcasm. I know that they're here, mocking me, but I prefer not to notice them.

With some effort, I found a flashlight. Darkness is all around. The light of the lantern absorbs it. But when the light disappears, darkness creates itself. Nobody is at home. I'm alone again. How I have always been. Smiling masks fly around me, giving me diamonds and piercing my soul with sharp knives. I no longer have a soul. They ask me how I feel. I say that I am glad, although in fact I could not have been more indifferent.

Damn... Better go to the kitchen for a candle. I don't want to plunge into darkness again...



There is light in the hallway. I see two figures standing there... But I'm not afraid. I left quietly. Closing my eyes, I thought about how stupid it was. I opened my eyes and turned around with a sigh. Darkness...

– Zhenya... Zhenya!

– Shut up – I said.

I started running... I am falling again... Falling and falling. I can fall as much as I want. And if not?

I'm not falling anymore; I'm just hanging in existence. I stood up, imagining the floor. I came up with a door and went into it. There I ended up inside my mind. Heavy sobbing, screaming, sand pouring.

I don't want to be here. I'd rather just forget...

DAY 2

I'm not surprised, but the darkness has left and I woke up. No, it's definitely not gone, but at least for a while I'll just be without it. As always, I pulled up my phone. I have nothing to do and it helps to distract me from the hating reality. I hate it back.

I'm not afraid, but I'm not brave either. What should I do? Looking for light? It's impossible. I realized that light no longer exists. At least for me. Better to just wait for the inevitable, the end, when there will be no light and no darkness. But after all... My task is not to get rid of the darkness... Maybe darkness is light? After all, darkness creates light as a contradiction! But darkness is created by light... It makes no sense!

But... The world can not only disappear into the darkness of my mind... It can disappear into the light. And when the end comes, the world will plunge into light, and I will be blinded and won't be able to exist any longer, since there will be nothing around and there will be no me. Will it be so? Or will darkness come, devouring everything and also leaving nothing? Or will everything just disappear? But how? I can not understand...

This book might not have existed, and it would have simply been lying around in my thoughts, which sooner or later would have burned out in the endless heat of hatred for everything. But no, I am wasting all my time; I have no time left to live. But no... I don't

live. I never have. I've already said that. But let's just forget.

Time has passed. It always goes away. An inevitable march to the rhythm of seconds, minutes, years. No matter how much you try to stop it, nothing will happen. It will only burst out and continue to destroy everything that is so dear to you and that was dear to you. Someone has more time than others; someone does not have it at all. Time is an abstract concept; in fact, time does not exist. We invented the time. We're making time.

As I said, time has passed. Not everything, just a gap. It left. Going into nothingness. Exactly. I ate breakfast with cheap food that doesn't need to be cooked and doesn't have to take any effort. Okay...

Sometimes I'm able to live. It happens, as I said, sometimes. No, not for my own self. Long ago I forgot how to live for myself. Inside I'm eternally dead. I do not take off my mask. I smile in everyone's face. Perhaps this is the reason? We are all so afraid of being different, we are all afraid that society will not accept us, that we wear fake grimaces, try to merge as much as possible, and kill ourselves from the inside. Society eats up our souls and everyone who is different is an outcast. But... We are all looking for light, in one sense or another. So, maybe this is the point? Maybe it's time to take off the mask?.. No...

I picked up the phone again. I often repeat what has already happened.

Looking for light? You're kidding... but ... Maybe you just need to believe?.. I often told to believe, in a certain sense. I said that you can achieve a lot simply by believing... It was too long ago. Not everything said is true... I'll try. Darkness.

– I don't want to see darkness. – I said.

But ... light! I'M LOOKING FOR LIGHT! YOU CAN NOT!
NO...

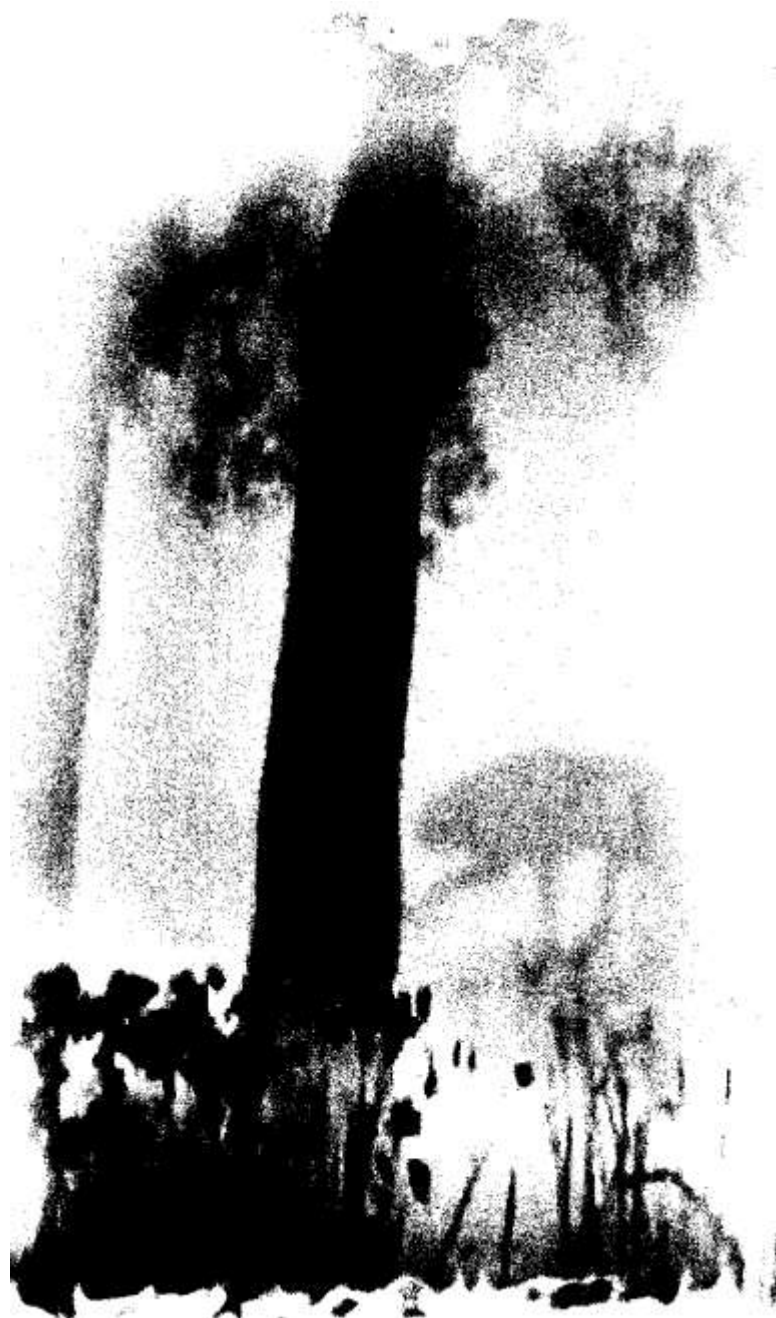
What does this mean?.. I don't understand. It seems to me that I will never understand again. Everything seems to be lost. But to find the light, I need to understand. I cannot find what I do not get. I can't think about what I'm not aware of. To understand light, I need to understand darkness. Or maybe... I need it by itself?!

Fog. It's bright, but I can't see anything. Maybe... YES! LIGHT CAN OVERCOME MY MIND TOO! But... I really can't see anything. Heck. I don't know if a flashlight would have helped, even though the batteries just ran out. I'll take it with me, if it comes in handy. Without much thought, I walked in one direction, looking at the place where I appeared. Nothing is visible.

–Ow! – I shouted.

There was an echo, as if someone was laughing at me and imitating me. I hit my head on... a tree?! Apparently, I'm in a forest. The endless, tangled and incoherent woods of my mind. How long? I must concentrate and remember why I am here...

The forest was not your typical forest park with grass, flowers and green trees. No, it was very damp, although there was no rain. Around on the floor were dried and then soaked leaves, pinecones, bark chips, branches. The trees were either without foliage, or conifers, pines, it seems. There are not many of them, so there is visibility around. The ground seems to be level, but from time to time some holes are visible and, perhaps, I see a hill in the distance... Or...



What the... Is someone there? It seems that someone ran through the fog. I distracted myself from my thoughts, no matter how silly it may sound in this situation, and began to peer into the distance. Something really flashed ahead, non-human. My mind continued to mock me. Over my fear, powerlessness over time, reality and even my own world. I'm not afraid... How many times can I tell myself this? Nothing changes that way. Just believing won't be enough. I need to understand...

Damn it... Hmm, when I rummaged in my pocket I think I found some batteries. I hope the flashlight is still working here... Yes! It turned on, and I moved it through the air. There was little value of it, but if there was a silhouette somewhere in the distance, I would see it more clearly.

After some time, the fog dissipated a little, but it was already beginning to thicken. Hmm... I think I came to some kind of a broken building. Again. Now, it looked more like a hut, or even a public toilet. Of the entire building remained only the concrete foundation and not so much walls, which seem to be also concrete. There was only one room and a doorway to it. I don't think anyone lives here.

Damp. I went inside as far as the destroyed structure allowed me. I don't feel like I'm going to be free. I see myself only in constant confinement. I strive for it. Even the smallest dilapidated walls attract me. FOR

HOW LONG WILL I BE HERE? But after all... I better understand, I will stay... but I also cannot.

Oh Lord... I went into the room and found a corpse, or just shapeless remains. LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE IS GNAWING ON THEM. SOMETHING. It turned around... Lord.

I ran. The something rushed after me. I was a witness. I've seen everything. They won't let me live anymore. I do not live. No. It can't be. Nonsense. No. Too pointless. I continued to run without looking back. Without looking into the past. I didn't look into the future. I was. I existed in the present. Crap! I stumbled on something...

After clearing my throat, I found myself lying. Ow. Pine needles prick the head. I can feel it. I'd better get up.

Ow. Heck. Where is the flashlight? I looked around and realized that I was completely lost. No landmarks around. Nothing. Nobody. Only emptiness and the constant humming in my ears. Apparently I dropped the lantern while still in the building. I'm not going to go back there at all. I'll figure it out, there is not much use from it anyway... Darkness creates itself. But... there is no darkness, no light. Where the hell am I?

I have a backpack. I'm hungry. I took out food. Fatuously. As the food, there was the same cheap crap, which does not require a lot of effort to cook

and eat. But now, in such an environment, I'll have to try... I'll get an axe.

I rummaged around and got a couple of semi-dry logs. Having found a more or less flat cutting surface, which was what a tree stump served me as, I got down to business, putting one of the logs.

- Eh! Ah! Oof! - I began to chop a lying log.

The axe was dull, but the job could have been done, although at the end I got a little tired, but I chopped some wood, got some bark and broke twigs as brushwood. I took the result, built a firewood "house", stuffed bark and branches there and tried to light a fire. At first, like an idiot, I thought I could start right away with brushwood. But it did not even start to flare up normally. I looked into my backpack and took out this book. Where does this sentiment come from? Having torn out a couple of pages, I spread them out under firewood and brushwood. Thinking for the last time and remembering that "manuscripts do not burn", I lit it and brought the match to the sheet of paper that was closest to me. A fire broke out from the paper; soon the brushwood and bark caught fire, and in a couple of minutes the logs themselves crackled and whistled.

"At least I'll get warm," I thought, but after a while, I took the cauldron and began to cook soup from what I took out of my backpack. It was a five-minute soup

that could be bought at the store for a very cheap price.

It was already getting dark. I wondered where I would sleep and if I would at all. It was hard to believe that I generally wanted to sleep, but it was true, and I again looked into my backpack, in which I had noticed a tent a long time ago. I took it out and tried to place it as best as I could. Soon it got completely dark. Here is the darkness, and I already missed it so much. I went to bed. Good night. I fell asleep.

An hour has passed. I woke up.

It's strange, I seem to be so used to darkness, and usually it was mundane to me, but now I was alert and even alarmed by something. I tried to go back to sleep, but chaos was in my head and I was just lying stupidly and listening to the humming in the ears.

Finally I got tired of it and got up.

“Uh... Hmm... What...” I muttered.

The fire was no longer burning.

I left the tent. The darkness was overwhelming. Has everything changed to that extent? No, this cannot be, these are just circumstances. If I reject the darkness, I have nothing left. Absolutely nothing... Damn... Something moved in the bushes... Ah...

A star flashed in the sky...

I hid in the tent. How many times have I told myself that I am not afraid, but now, when there is darkness in front of me, I am in fear, in horror... No. Enough.

I went out. And went to where the rustle came from. I cautiously approached the bushes, got myself together and resolutely pushed the branches away...

My heart skipped a beat. Sometimes it's better to hold yourself back. It makes no sense to constantly impose something on you and contradict yourself. But you can't give in to weakness... I am weak. For now. You have to wait for the moment. Now... I better just get out of here.

I folded my tent, put it in my backpack and went. Where to? I do not know. To the light. I didn't see it, just walked in hope and faith. I believed.

Fog. Dark. I lost my flashlight. Water. Yes, I went out to the water. I'll sit down and wait for it to brighten. My nose was damp and wet from the water. It was still quiet, and it hardly moved. It was even a little calm, I was beginning to drift back to sleep.

Sometimes the water seems red to me... I almost closed my eyelids...

“CAW! CAW! CAW!..”

A frightened flock of crows flew out of the forest. There will be no rest for me. I'm not going to go there, to hell with that. Better to stay here... I think someone is looking at me from there, from afar... I

see eyes... They are standing motionless, insensibly looking into the depths of my consciousness. They disappeared...

I feel sick and a slight chill from time to time passes through my body. Hands shake periodically. I have to think... But it can wait, right? Thank God it's dawn soon.

DAY 3

Yes... I've been here for almost a day. In the meantime, nothing has changed. I'm still as empty and without a single idea. I want to take a nap. The darkness is slowly starting to go away. I laid in the tent and fell asleep in it...

Still tired, I opened my eyes, yawned and thought I just couldn't get any more sleep. I got up. 2 hours passed.

– At least I slept...

My stomach ached due to my hunger, I decided to do the same procedure as yesterday. I looked in my backpack and found a pack of sausages. Taking them out, amazed at the versatility of the backpack, I decided to open them and smell them. I don't know what the sausages should smell like. No use to do it anyway. Looking for some wood, I built a fire, again spending a couple of pages of the book. Book? Novella, short story, it doesn't matter. Call it whatever you want, it makes no difference to me. The first match went out, not even really flaring up. The second lit up. I brought it to the pages, they flashed, but after a while everything went out again. The wood was too damp.

The wood nearby was damp, so I had to walk a little further to find drier wood. Near the water the visibility was for some reason a little better and it was

a good reference point or landmark, so I reassured myself with this. I went in one direction, strictly, without turning anywhere. Looking around, I tried the nearest wood. It was clearly drier than the one by the water. I put a couple of logs in my backpack. Having collected bark and a few more logs, I threw them there too. The rest will have to be carried in my hands. I put the backpack on a stump and walked away a little to collect branches with needles. That's it, got to go back...

Turning around, I no longer found the backpack. What a cliché, there is nothing more predictable. Though there was no stump either... Where am I at all? I saw something nearby. Someone's silhouette... In the air. Hanging on a rope tied to a tree. There was no wind, the corpse did not move at all.

I was not scared. I was puzzled. I moved towards it. Who is it? Why here? Why like that?! I came closer and closer, already realizing that I was from the back to the corpse. I came close and realized that there was a bag on the head of it. It hung rather high; I could not reach the bag. There were no long sticks around either. I decided to try climbing the tree. Legs slipped out, but I found points of support and climbed onto the first branching. The branch with the corpse was thick and, apparently, quite strong. I crawled cautiously to the rope, reached for the sack and was about to pull it off...

I pulled myself up sharply and grabbed the branch like a cat. In a state of total daze, I looked at my hand. It was stopped by another. By the hand of the corpse. With his free hand, he reached for the bag.

“No, no, no!” - I thought, but could not say a word.

The corpse pulled the bag off its head.

It's me.

It can't be. I believed you! I gave you everything! How can you do this to me?! NO! I closed my eyes and felt myself leaning.

Apparently I slipped and hit my back pretty hard. Only after a couple of seconds I already realized that my back, head and tailbone hurt. I opened my eyes. In front of them was my backpack on the stump.

“Well, to hell with it” - I thought. Standing up, I realized that the pain was only an illusion. I took my backpack and the remaining brushwood and got ready to go, but realized that I didn't know where. I am lost. But I went. Where to? I don't know again. Hope to water. It was quieter there.

Fog. Light. I've lost my way. Water. Yes, I went out to the water again. I think I can see my tent on the left. Excellent.

Finally, I lit the fire. After warming up for about 15 minutes, I made coals, took the sausages and began

to fry them on it. The sausages sizzled and the fat dripped directly onto the coals.

– Uh-huh...

It took about 20 minutes. The sausages were fried. I ate some and went to rummage around in my backpack. There I found some marshmallow.

About an hour passed. I decided to take a dip in the water. At first, I thought it would be too cold, but going into the water, I realized that, actually, it is not that bad there. The fog cleared a little again. This is partly why I had the courage to go in. It was still chilly, but somewhat refreshing... I dived. Then emerged...

Damn... where am I? The shore is not visible. The fog seems to have thickened... Crap. The water was neck-deep, but it seemed as if it was rising very slowly. There was still no wind. I turned around...



OH MY GOD! RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME FROM THE WATER A BLOODY HAND RISED OUT... IT SEEMS TO BE CUT WITH SYMBOLS... WH... What should I do? I closed my eyes. Sometimes it helps. But I'm sinking into darkness again.

– Eh... Um... – I mumbled and coughed.

I think I'm on the shore. I'm lying on the sand. Got to wash it off of myself.

Huh. I will probably go further. I folded my tent down again and went.

Boring. Eh. But I still... someone ran through the fog again...

– Hey! – I shouted – Who are you?!

It looked at me, but ran away. I just waved after.

Lord. I'm tired of this. I understood a little of darkness, light. I'm quite ready. I closed my eyes. I'm leaving. Farewell.

Fog. It's bright, but I can't see anything. Yes maybe! LIGHT CAN OVERCOME MY MIND too!..

Yes, as I said, sometimes I repeat some things. But why am I STILL HERE... WHAT SHOULD I UNDERSTAND?! WHAT DO YOU WANT?!! Come back! Crap...

Die. Please die. Why is it so hard to ask for this? Free the soul from the body. Death will give you free rein. What are you waiting for?

I coughed. Apparently I “froze” and wasted a couple of minutes, or even an hour. I’m getting sleepy...

But I will continue.

I rummaged in my backpack. Having found a phone there, I tried to grasp the network, but to no avail.

It was already close to evening. Fire. Tent. I was on the phone. About an hour passed and I started cooking rice. I didn’t care about the surroundings; in fact, there is little that worries me now. After a while, the rice was cooked, now I’m eating it. It’s getting dark again. I finish my juice. Damn... Strange sounds once again...

– Hey!! Who’s there?! – I shouted.

Although... This is the forest of my mind... But it is usually quiet here. I had a familiar premonition that someone was still around. Yes. There is something in the bushes...

– Who’s there?..

I did not see what was there, because the bush was far away.

– Hey ?!

Something got out. Oh my God.

– What do you want!?! I shouted.

I...

– Zhenya?

– What... uh...

– Oh. Thank God, you're fine

– AH! WHAT!

– It's me, Sasha

– Sasha?

Sasha Cheberyak stood before my eyes. We started laughing.

– What are you doing here? – I asked.

– I don't know myself. Already 4 days here somehow.

– Same...

We started laughing again.

Sitting down by the fire, we chatted, in principle, nothing special. I have forgotten fear and anxiety. Everything passed... I forgot how I was striving for loneliness... I realized that the whole point is in me, in my selfish side, when I am lonely and reject everything around me.

We were laughing, when suddenly... Something fell out of my backpack... Beer.

– Are you serious? – asked Sasha.

– I don't know...

Sasha began to laugh.

DAY 4

– O-oh...

– Hmm...

We woke up.

– What happened yesterday?

“Sometimes people may not remember insignificant things. It’s okay if you drink too much.”

The visibility was tiny. The fog thickened to hell. I realized that I was not in the tent, but on a log. Now that Sasha is around, what should I do? How do I explain everything to him?

I looked into the tent. Sasha was there and also got up. If all this is just my mind, what is Sasha doing here? He can’t be real... I don’t understand... It seems that the best way out would be just to do what I did before.

Sasha went out, rubbing his head. I went to the toilet. Trying to think through the headache, I could not find a sensible explanation. I returned.

– Don’t do that anymore, – Sasha said.

– What?

– Don’t rummage in your backpack – Sasha answered and smiled.

No doubt I was glad to see him. But it worried me that he was also stuck here. What is he doing in

this place? Is he also looking for it? Will there really be an end?.. So far I have decided not to ask him.

Sasha and I collected our backpacks. We set off.

An hour has passed. We kept walking. I was beginning to lose hope. Suddenly Sasha called me and pointed into the fog. I looked where he was pointing. There was a well ahead. We approached it carefully.

– I'll go drown myself, – Sasha quoted.

– Don't even think about it.

Words burst out automatically when I spoke to Sasha. I didn't have to think... I didn't have to think...

Despite the chaos in my head, a thought arose. Very clear. Very disgusting. Its blackness began to spread in my mind like cancer. Sasha went to the well and looked down. I stopped still on the spot. Sasha did not notice me. Two entities were fighting in me. Common sense and desire to understand. For centuries, these two ideas have fought in our humanity. But now everything was happening in my head. I passed out.

– Zhenya? What are you doing?

I stood right in front of Sasha, staring blankly into him with my eyes. Emotionless. Without anything. Without a soul...

Maybe that's the point?..

– Oh, sorry, nothing... So what's with the well?

–No idea. There seems to be water, but there is no bucket. You need it?

– I guess not.

– Okay...

I rejected it all the time. I tried not to think about it, to banish all thoughts. All the time I thought that chaos reigns in my head and all my ideas go into emptiness. No. I am depraved, I am pathetic and disgusting. These ideas have always been there, and I have always rejected them, trying to forget. Thus, I only had corruption. A dark, disgusting entity controlled me. Full of hate, anger. No... This is darkness.

I was thrown to the well. Sasha has already moved further. I looked back. A black silhouette held my head. It tilted me towards the well, trying to throw me into it. I put my hands against the boulders. Pushing it off, I walked to the left; the black essence ran at me. I jumped back, hit it in the head, but it had no effect.

I understand what's going on. This is all just my mind. I can think of light...

The entity screamed. With all its might it threw itself at me. Light appeared in front of me. I dodged the entity and intercepted it. Now, I threw it with

all my might towards the well. It flew there, I pushed it down.

– It's a lie. You are a brainless idiot.

It was me. I was in the well, in the last hope of breaking free, holding onto the cobblestone walls. I cannot just get rid of the darkness. The darkness is me. I managed to come up with light... Light? Really...

A hand reached out to me. I grabbed it and climbed out.

– What are you doing, you crazy?

– But... Darkness... Light...

– You talking nonsense? I looked around and then you flew into the well.

– So... there was no light? Was it all me?

– What are you even talking about? Let's go.

I dusted myself off and followed Sasha. I think I'm getting there! I begin to understand! Soon everything will be over and will return to its origins!..

I'm ready. Yes. Got to get out of here. Got to help Sasha get out...

Another half hour passed. We were moving in the same direction. Suddenly there was a sound, somewhat reminiscent of the hooting of an owl... At first I did not pay attention to it, but then I

remembered that it is usually quiet here, apart from the eternal humming in my ears, so such sounds mean something extraneous... But everything has already cleared up. It must have been my head.

– You heard that too? – asked Sasha.

– Yeah... – I drawled, hoping that it is still an owl.

It didn't take too long for the source of the sound to reveal itself. In front of us I saw something... Some... pile? I came closer. Yes, it was an owl. Owls usually do not lie on the ground. Dismembered. With protruding bones and entrails outward.

– Don't come here – I shouted to Sasha. I didn't know if I should be worried, confused, or saddened. My thoughts were interrupted by a knock coming from afar. A very rhythmic knock. Sasha was also alert. A knock came from somewhere to the left. There was a thicket, the trees were denser. I thought for a while and went there.

– Aye, stop, where are you going? – asked Sasha.

It's time to find a way out.

I spread the branches. The knocking continued. We moved towards it. Suddenly it stopped and there was the cry of an animal. I got out into the clearing and decided to look around. Here something in the fog nevertheless attracted my attention... Sasha just came up. Lord...



Something in the fog again. It's eating a dead animal... It looks like a deer... Enough. Please...

It turned... and looked at us.

Sasha just stood there, not believing his eyes. With a dash, the creature ran up to him and... Oh no. I saw claws... and a stain on the clothes. No, no! Sasha. Sasha? SASHA!!! He fell lifeless. It can't be. Simple as that. How pointless... The creature turned to me. I absolutely didn't know what to do...

Following instinct, I began to run. I ran for a long time, the humming crushed my ears, I did not hear footsteps from behind, but I did not turn around. Crap! It couldn't have happened, it was just UNREAL! Ow! A rock!

I screamed. Pretty long. Then everything stopped.

I fell off a cliff and broke everything for myself. I barely blinked. Everything was washed out. Farewell. I'm leaving.

– 3!

DAY 5

Oh... What a dream. As expected. I am here again. But... I should have understood the darkness, right?

I understood. Nothing exists without darkness, and so is the case with light. They are alike. Light, akin to darkness, can blind my mind. But also enlighten it. But after all... Soon the end will come... It seems that I better understand emptiness and come to terms.

Sasha? No, this is a dream again. I think he's fine. I hope... No. Stop letting everything happen and take action for the sake of it. I started looking for my phone. Digging in my pockets, I found it, took it out and dialed Sasha. Beeps followed.

– At the moment, the subscriber cannot receive your call – was heard from there.

What? No, I mean, it's...

I dialed again. Same. I looked at the call history. Empty. Nobody. Not a single soul.

Really?.. No, this simply cannot be. I closed my eyes, plunged into the familiar darkness. Now I saw it in a new, other way. I understood how lonely it is inside and how inorganic it is to me, but I realized that without it I was nothing.

I opened my eyes. Am I still here? I looked out the window. Rain, fog. But... yes, no one is there.

I called my mom. No one answered. I waited and called again. Silence. Humming. I searched the whole house, no one was there. I lay down on the sofa, hoping and expecting that someone would come, come to me, tell me something... But no. I have long strived for loneliness, maybe even without realizing it. And so, here I am. One. No one else around. I am alone with me. And it will always be so.

Everything broke like glass. I fall into the void again. Yet again I see everything as it was, only now there is merely me and my consciousness. I don't see the light... but I don't see the darkness either. But... HERE IT IS! LIGHT! At last! I have achieved what was required! It's here!

I blinked and shook my head. The light was still there. I found it. I understood. Everything worked out. It will be over soon. I took it, it's mine... But... I can't take it. No... No, no, no... This...

I've searched for so long, suffered for so long, all my fucking life! NO! THERE IS NOTHING! THERE WILL BE NO MORE ATTEMPTS. NO LIGHT! NO DARKNESS! THIS IS THE END FOR ME!..

Despite the chaos in my head, a thought arose. Very clear. Very light. Very... understandable. The light is not important. The darkness is not important. What is significant is that I discovered them in myself. The important thing is not that I cannot take the light, but that I can help someone to open it in themselves.

And to comprehend the darkness as it is. Such, without which light is just a blind emptiness. One that without light is just an abyss, murk. There wouldn't be one without the other. But some things should be forgotten.

– What? How? – I heard.

– WHO ARE YOU?!

– You can't! After all...

– Anya?

What happened has already happened. You cannot change the course of events in the past. It's time to alter it in the present.

– Nothing happened, never.

– How can you say that?

– You're just a metaphor. You are the temptation to succumb to your own isolation and live only in yourself.

– I miss you!

– No. It is not right. You are the part of me that I loved deeply. But the time has come to leave.

– I want to be with you!

– All my life I have blindly followed your will. I blindly believed that it would be better this way and I did not live. I didn't have a soul. I was so eager for loneliness

and unity with myself that I almost lost touch with this world.

– You do not understand!..

– I understood. All of it. You need to divide your life into darkness and light and not reject either one or the other, since they are inherent everywhere and always.

– But...

“All my memories bring darkness.” This is not true. That which was light has been rejected. These memories should be left in the dark, in the past. There is always darkness; I didn’t need it, but ...

“In some darkness, you can find light...”.

Yes! Exactly. Now... I just need to remember...



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HELL'S BOOK

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