

A watercolor illustration depicting a woman and a man. The woman, on the left, is dressed in a dark blue long-sleeved dress with a white lace collar and a light blue bonnet with a white lace trim. She has blonde hair and is looking towards the right. She carries a brown wicker basket filled with green leafy vegetables. The man, on the right, has dark hair and is wearing a green jacket. He is looking towards the left. A large, white, cylindrical object, possibly a rolled-up document or a container, is positioned between them. In the background, there is a church with a tall, pointed steeple on the left and a modern cityscape with several buildings on the right. A tree with pink blossoms is visible behind the woman. The overall style is soft and artistic, with a muted color palette.

12+

Olga Mitkina

Love through the time

Romantic story

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Love through the time

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Аннотация

Sometimes, in order to find happiness, you just need... fall back in time. It is a romantic story about a medical student called John. He met beautiful Mary. It could be a very happy tale. But is it real to cheat the fate? Will the time come when young people will have to break up? And is there a way to manage someone's life, space and time? Look for answers in the story by Olga Mitkina "Love through the time".

One day Ivan, a second-year student of a medical university, as usual, went out and headed for the bus stop. He wandered, whistling his beloved song. His overgrown dark hair waved in the cool wind. He wanted spring very much. The sun did not fry, as in the summer, but only affectionately, gently warmed. Ruffled sparrows bathed in puddles and twittered, infecting people with their unrestrained fun. Continuing to go, Ivan threw his head back, enjoying the first warm. He even closed his eyes with pleasure. Suddenly he stumbled and stretched to full length on the wet land.

Probably, the guy lost consciousness for a while, when he woke up, the world around him has totally changed. High-rise gray concrete buildings disappeared, cars, too. Wooden and red brick buildings with facades and pilasters surrounded him. Women with hats of different models and color and in gorgeous dresses to the floor with numerous ruffles and frills passed by Ivan. Men in dark frocks and high hats rushed for their business, waving their elegant canes. Carriages harnessed by horses racked on the cobblestone pavement, and horses under riders clattered. Ivan, petrified with amazement, realized that he had fallen in the past. But what was the country and the century?



The young man judged that the most reasonable would be to go into the tavern on the opposite side of the street and listen to conversations to understand exactly where he was.

The hall was very noisy. The breakfast time. Ivan looked around. Two men in cotton shirts ate fried eggs with toasted ham with an appetite, washing it down with freshly brewed fragrant coffee.

At the next table, three friends had pancakes with maple syrup. And a group of local residents in the corner discussed loudly yesterday's news, from time to time raising their mugs with cider.

Ivan settled not far from that company and listened

to the conversation. Visitors laughed at the coward escape of the local governor on British ships because of the scandalous case with illegal gunpowder's exportation. There was an English speech. Noting terse remarks about the Foggy Albion natives, having studied the menu and watching the people's clothes, Ivan guessed, that he found himself in America of the nineteenth century.

He moved into a corner, trying to be almost invisible, and began to think how to get out back in his era. His gaze lingered on a lonely girl standing at the bar with a beautiful, but very sad face.

The young lady was dressed in a long brown dress with an overhead lace collar and a snow-white bonnet with lace along the edge. Ivan decided to come and get acquainted. Approaching the girl, he saw an elegant ring with blue sapphire on her forefinger.

—

Hello, miss!

Thank the English school teacher; Ivan did not have any problem with the English language.

— Hello! What would you like, sir? Maybe, cider? My father has the best apple orchards in the whole Virginia.



– O, no! I do not drink in the morning. I only wanted to ask how did you get this wonderful ring?

It's a family heirloom. It was given to me by my mother before her death; it belonged to my great-grandmother before. All women in our family believed that it brings the mistress happiness and luck in love. This sapphire came here from England: many years ago my grandmother fled from the religious persecution. However, I am not very lucky. May I ask you about something?

– Ask, – Ivan nodded.

– You have such a strange accent, and I have never seen you

in our tavern, although I have been helping my father since I was six years. Where are you from?

– I'm from Russia. – Ivan did not compose any legends.

– Are you a sailor? – asked the girl. – My brother also went to serve in the fleet. Before leaving, he said that, he would find a paradise on the Earth, because we did live here very well.

Taxes are so high that even working all day around, we hardly survive. Someday the brother will return and will take me and our aged father to that wonderful place, – sighed sadly, she looked away. Although it has been five years since he left for sailing, we know nothing about him. Maybe evil pirates attacked his ship. I heard that now a lot of them wander the oceans. They rob commercial and military vessels and capture the crew, and sometimes even kill people. Recently, one traveler stayed at our inn, and he told me about it.

– "No, I'm not a sailor." I'm a future doctor, I'm still learning, for some reason Ivan wanted to tell only the truth to this lovely girl.

– "How wonderful that you are a doctor!" Our friend's son felt sick. Could you please look at him? Local doctor, mister McQueen, came to them yesterday and said that he could not do anything. Believe me, Peter is an extraordinary boy! I know him from his birth. He is very kind and cheerful. When he sees that I'm coming back from the market with baskets full of vegetables and fruit, he always helps me to convey them telling such funny stories that I laugh even in the dull day. Please save him!

– "All right, I'll look at the boy." How do I find the way?

–

It will be much less visitors in half an hour: the breakfast time will end; and I'll accompany you. Once again, thanks for your help.

Soon Ivan walked along an unfamiliar street, paved with large cobblestones. Nearby was a charming girl in a low-key, but neat dress and raincoat – so long that she had to raise a hem when they met puddles or mud on the way.

– I forgot to ask ... And what is your name? – Turned the guy to his companion.

– My name is Mary. And how is yours?

– In your country I'll be John.

– Very nice to meet you, – answered the girl with a polite smile.

–

Mutually.

Mary was so shy and lovely that Ivan involuntarily admired her: so much charm and modesty in one person you can seldom meet in the modern world. Although most of the road he looked around, studying the exotic town.

They passed an old church from red-brown brick with huge stained-glass windows surrounded by white frames and with a spire sharp as a sword. It seemed, a little bit more – and it will pierce through floating clouds in the sky that the priest, feeling the curiosity, could look briefly to where, presumably, God lives.

Then the young people drew attention to the pompous house, similar to a small castle with round towers. The banner of the British East-Indian company fluttered on the roof of the building. Ivan wanted to stop and study more closely the building and the flag, but they were in a hurry: a sick child was waiting for treatment, and it was necessary to return to work for the girl.

Finally, Mary turned to a rather modest house. A pleasant elderly woman with sad eyes opened the door. Ivan guessed, it was the mother of a boy. They followed to a cramped but cozy room with a narrow bed at the corner.

The boy of eight or nine years old, with a light, but disheveled and wet from the heat hair and huge blue eyes, in a long thin shirt, lay on the bed. Ivan approached the patient's bed, listened to breathing and touched the very hot kid's forehead. Symptoms indicated that, most likely, the boy got the pneumonia. The medicine of that time was powerless against such a disease. Miraculously in bag that hung on Ivan's shoulder and served as the university beg, were effective antipyretic and analgesic pills, he took with him in the morning at the request of a friend.

Marta, mother of Peter, was very worried for his son and ran around the new doctor, confusedly telling that the local doctor ordered to relax more and better to eat.

Ivan gave the boy medicines and explained to the worried woman how to take it further. Meanwhile the patient became better: a light smile appeared on his face.



Sincerely worrying about his patient, Ivan decided that he would stay in the town until the next day to check whether treatment give the expected result. He also has not figured out yet how to return. Promising Martha to visit them tomorrow in the morning, young man left the house with his companion.

Deciding to stay in the past, Ivan was concerned about finding a place to stay for an overnight, but there were no dollars in pockets. He asked Mary, where he could earn on one-day orders: for example, to transfer cargoes or perform any other heavy work. The girl suggested returning to tavern and helping her and her father until the end of the day, in return promising to let the

young man to sleep in the room under the roof, where her brother lived before he became a sailor.

They went back following the same way, but the guest from future had time to notice something new in particular: the ancient sun clock on a square nearby the church. Looking at it, he realized that it was almost a lunch break, which means they needed to step faster: according to Mary, there must be a lot of people in the tavern at this time.

When they came to the tavern, people have already begun to approach. Young mistress asked Ivan to put on a waiter's apron, also left over from her brother, and help to serve customers.

The rest of the day flew by at lightning speed. The young man was rushing around the tavern with huge mugs filled with cider, delicious chicken and fried potatoes cut into large slices. He visited vegetable market with Mary, where he watched with enthusiasm how skillfully the girl knocked down the price, buying products from noisy women in wide colorful dresses.

Late in the evening, Ivan fell down from fatigue. He has absolutely no energy even for food, he drank milk from a clay jug, ate a slice of hot bread and, having finished a modest meal, he was to go to the room to sleep. However, at the last moment he changed his mind and went to a spring street to admire the silent night, not everyone is given a chance to be under the American sky of the nineteenth century!

There was no wind. In the dark sky the ice stars glittered brightly. Above houses there was an elegant young moon; in

the silent calm of the American town, where life after sunset practically stops, he wanted to reflect on the eternal alone.

After standing for several minutes on a fresh air, Ivan returned to the tavern, climbed to the attic and lay down on the prepared bed, smelling of fragrant hay. Despite of fatigue, he did not fall asleep immediately. So often happens in a new place. The guy peered at the ceiling and wondered how he would be able to get back to Moscow of the twenty first century. The decision came suddenly. In the fantasies movies traveling in time people got home from the same place, where their journey began. So tomorrow after Peter's visit, he will go to the lawn opposite the tavern and study it and the surrounding neighborhood carefully. Ivan fell asleep with this optimistic thought.

And in his dream he saw himself as a little boy in the village near Moscow, running with barefoot on a tattered grass with nettle for colorful butterflies. Ivan eagerly inhaled aromas of herbs, admired the cheerful feeding of grasshoppers and enjoyed unlimited freedom.

He was not surprised at all, when he heard cocks. It cannot sound different in the village in the morning! Bright rays of the early sun broke through the narrow attic window. Dining room of the tavern was right under the closet, so the air was amazing – smell of fresh bread and fried coffee grains.

Ivan went downstairs cheerfully, he asked Mary if she needed his help. The girl answered that she would cope herself, and invited the guest to eat breakfast – bacon and strong black coffee.

And so he sat by the window, looked at the visitors and enjoyed an excellent food. The loud and naughty chirping of birds came from the street. Sky was absolutely blue and clear. Ivan noticed only a couple of clouds. One of them was like a heavy elephant with a long proboscis, and another – a gentle fairy with a magic wand.

"Today should be wonderful day ", – John thought.

Having finished breakfast, the young man thanked Mary for a wonderful treat and went to Peter.

He remembered the road well and reached the place quite quickly. As the last time, the door was opened by Martha. She looked much more cheerful. The child slept peacefully all night. Medicines worked: the boy had an appetite. Saying a couple of words with Peter, the doctor gave recommendations for his mother for further treatment and left the house.

Despite the fact that Ivan almost ran to the patient to learn more about his health, he noticed standing in the distance luxurious a colonial style palace. And the young man, promised himself to return to it on the way back. Coming closer, he saw that the palace surrounded by a low brick fence. A gravel path led to the main entrance from the gate.

The iron wickerwork with family coat of arms connected the pillars. Great mythical creatures sat on the columns, and each of them kept in their paws a shield with the same family coat of arms.

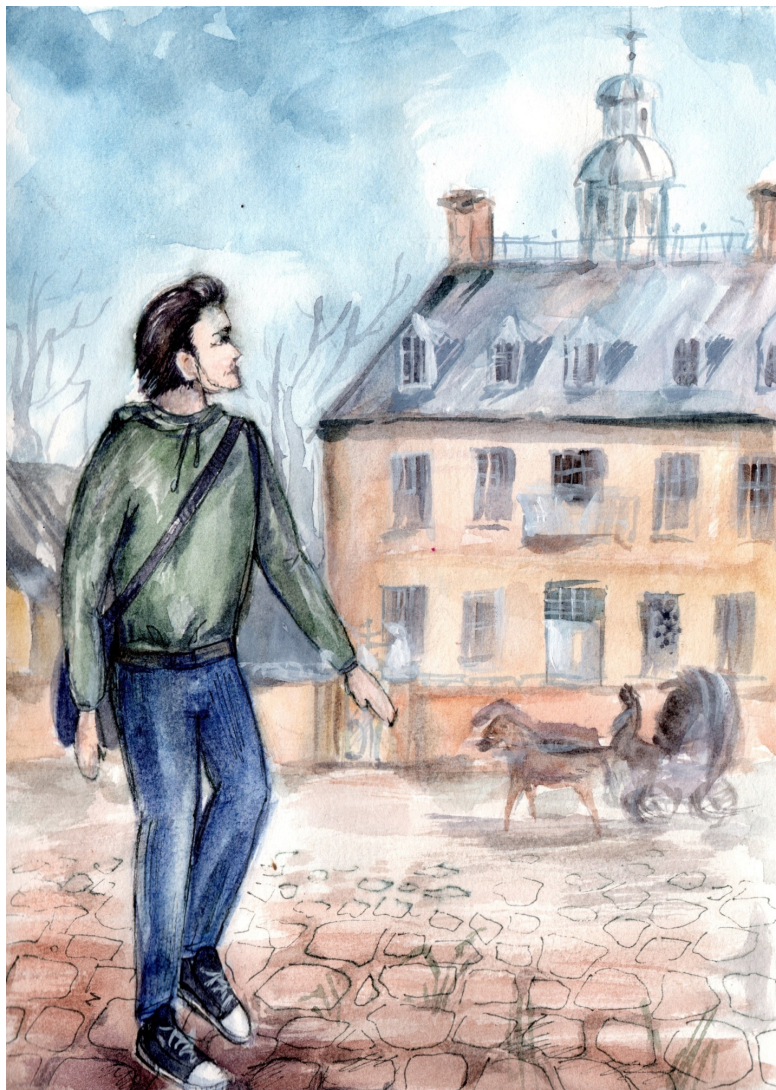
One-storey buildings, probably having economic purpose,

were located around the mansion.

The Lord's house was crowned with a rectangular tower with narrow windows and twisting-weathering on the steeple. Ivan understood in the definition of world's parts, because he often went with his grandfather to pick up mushrooms in the forest as a child, armed with a compass, and he also loved to read Jules Verne books. He looked up and determined: north-west wind blew.

Ivan walked along the fence, he could see an unusually beautiful garden with neatly tonsured in English style trees and bushes, and he guessed that there are lots of flowers in summer. For a second he even thought that he felt them alluring aroma.

"What a pity that I can't look inside the mansion and wander around the rooms there", Ivan thought.



He imagined, how he enters the elegant living room, and there the wood crackle softly in the lighted fireplace. On the contrary, a woolen blanket in a red and blue cage abandoned on the rocking chair. And on the floor, on the bear's skin lie two red English spaniels – owner's favorites.

Plunged into pleasant reflections, young man did not notice a middle-aged man in a black cocked hat, a green frock coat and light pants. A stranger inquired Ivan in a harsh tone what he was doing about the Governor's house. The guy apologized and hurried towards the tavern.

Even at the approach to the building Ivan realized, that something extraordinary happened during his absence: many people fussed about on the street, all were extremely excited and discussed something animatedly.

He approached one of the guests and asked:

"Good afternoon, sir!" Do not tell me what happened here?

– Good day, but not for everyone! Just now Smith ... Well, you probably know him: he often hangs around here nearby on Lyon Street ... Such shaggy, dirty, barefoot and almost always with a cigarette in teeth ... So, Smith broke into the tavern, snatched from Mary, the daughter of the owner, two loafs of bread and ran away. The girl was very frightened. Now, most likely, there will be a court hearing.

"Have you caught the tramp?" – asked Ivan curiously.

– Yes, he is not as young and fast as he was before. William, an assistant shoemaker, just at that moment had a snack in the tavern. The guy is crazy about Mary, so he chased after the robber without hesitation. But running man had time to hide and, before William managed to grab him, ate one loaf. So the hearing cannot be avoided.

–

Thank you for information. I'll go to see how things are there.

Nodding in good-bye to his interviewer, Ivan slipped through the crowd, entered the tavern and began to look for Mary: it was necessary to calm the girl. She was sitting at a table at the far corner of the hall, lowering her head and covering her face with her hands. Hearing the steps, she flinched.

Her hair is slightly disheveled and fell to the forehead. Eyelashes wet with tears seemed even longer and nicer.

– Did you come? How's Peter?

– The boy is much better. I am sure, in a couple of weeks he will be absolutely healthy– said, sitting down near Mary.

Her lips trembled. It was felt, that she hardly restrains her tears.

– John, while you were gone, something happened ... – and the girl cried again.

She told the whole story that the boy had already heard. Ivan embraced her friendly and promised accompany her to a court hearings and help with a fresh bread.

After a while the onlookers went home. Ivan worked all day in

a tavern helping Mary to serve customers. Today in connection with the incident there were more people than normal: everyone wanted to discuss the case of Smith and make the assumption of the outcome of the hearing appointed for the evening.

To the lawn, where his unusual journey started, Ivan did not return on that day. First of all, he could not leave Mary alone. Secondly, it was extremely curious to look at the hearings, because he did not have a chance to present in the American court of the nineteenth century. At five o'clock, young people went to the court from the tavern. Optimism and cheerfulness did not remain from the morning. I did not feel like talking for some reason, and they did not say a word on the way.

Only when the courthouse has already appeared on the horizon, Mary worriedly asked:

– What do you think, John, will everything go well today? I'm so worried.

– Don't worry, everything will be fine. I am with you, said Ivan and lightly, shook the girl's hand, as if he wanted to convey his calmness.

The local temple of Themis looked like one-story brown bricks building with sloping roof and laconic color shutters. Inside walls and ceiling were also painted white. Among the absolute whiteness there were several rows of dark wood benches for participants of the hearings and spectators. A massive wooden table with high-backed chair was opposite the benches.



Passing by the table, Ivan slowed his pace and managed to notice neatly laid out sheets of paper. On one of them, the text was clear and easy to read: it was Bill of rights. "In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed; which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense" Amendment VI, 1791), read Ivan.

Suddenly the judge entered the hall. It was a middle-aged man in a long black gown and gray-haired wig, descended much lower sloping shoulders. Haughty and cold were felt in this representative of the government. Ivan even slightly shivered, physically feeling a sudden– shivering.

Meanwhile, the judge began his speech. "The case of Mr. Richard Smith against the State ... He is accused of the theft in the tavern "Sally Brown", that on the Ring Road, happened today at ten o'clock in the morning... Guard, bring the detainee.

A tattered, dirty tramp entered the hall. With his appearance, the room was filled with a specific odor of alcohol and long unwashed body.

Mr. Smith, do you admit that this morning you committed the

theft in the tavern "Sally Brown?" – stone face of the judge did not express any emotions.

– Yes, – barely audible, to himself, grumbled Smith.

"In that case, Mr. Smith, I am giving you the punishment in the form of 10 lashes. Punishment should be execute immediately and is not subject to appeal – after pronouncing the verdict, the judge struck a wooden hammer on the stand and disappeared as silently as appeared.

And the criminal, with his head down, followed to the backyard, where preparations for the execution were already completed.

A visitor from the future somehow became sad, but judging by the mood in the hall, all people approved the court decision.

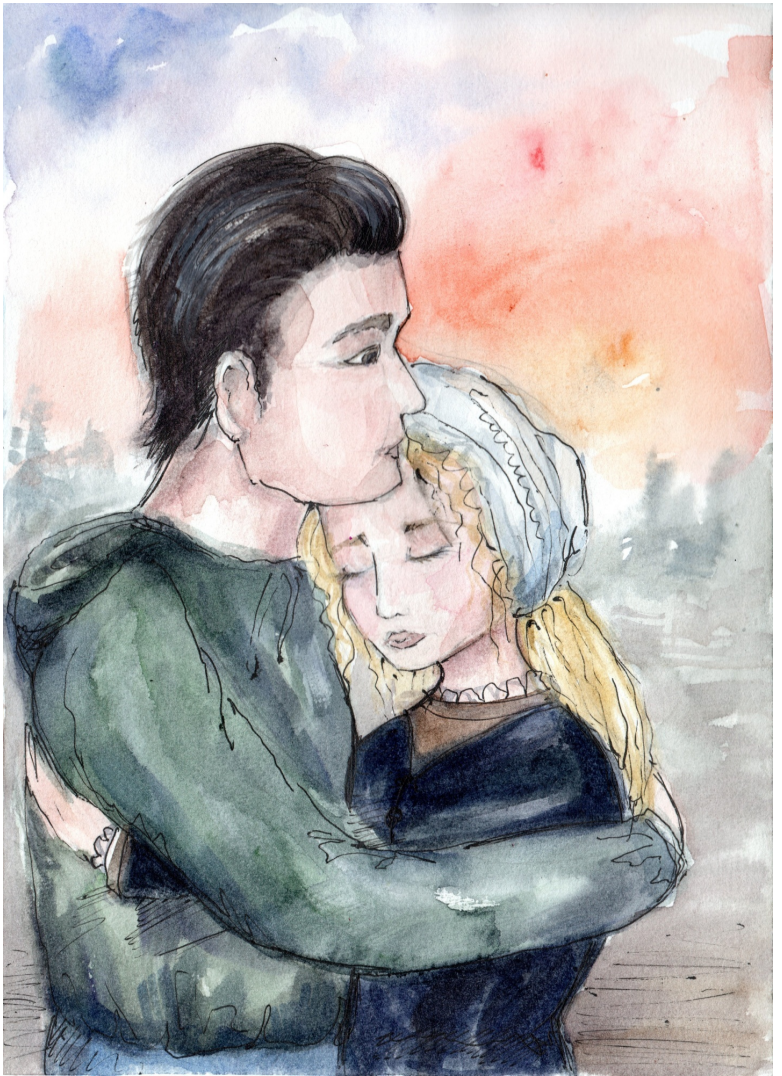
When Ivan and Mary left the courthouse, the spring day has already burnt out and the sun fell to the horizon, tinted clouds in a pinkish color. The crescent moon dimly appeared on the blue sky dome. It became quite cool.

The girl felt much calmer and suggested go a long way, descending to the river. A young man agreed: he wanted to spend as much time as possible with his charming companion. They talked.

"Well, Mary, the robber has been punished, Peter is recovering. Tomorrow early in the morning I can go home.

–

Home? Do you sail on the ship? Ivan did not want to hide anything from Mary.



For some reason he was sure that the girl would understand. After a pause, he exhaled loudly and said:

– No, not on the ship. I return to the future. The young lady rounded her eyes for a second, but, gazing intently at the serious face of a young man, realized that he was not joking and did not fantasize.

– And what is it look like, your future? – she asked in a low voice.

Mary, you would not like it. High concrete houses, in which many people live, touched the sky. They look alike, as twin brothers, and faceless: there is no beauty and uniqueness of old buildings in it. People have little contact with each other. Instead of this they spend all days around sitting in front of the computers – such iron boxes with incredible opportunities: for example, they can send letters for a second to any part of the world or instantly find the right path on the map. But they do not have a soul, they will not warm up on a lonely winter evening.

No one is moving around the city by the horses – all drive cars: such carriages, which are much faster, but pollute the air and are very dangerous.

– And do you want to go back there? Can you stay with us? – Mary looked at Ivan with hope. I liked working with you, and you could treat people here.

– Unfortunately, I can't. I have got relatives and friends. They

will miss me.

– It's a pity, – she turned away.

– And I'm sorry. Believe me, I would be very happy to stay with you, – without understanding the reason, Ivan felt guilty.

The wind intensified. Young man saw that Mary literally trembles, and unexpectedly took her fragile shoulders, unfolded and hugged. Heart hammered. There was silence all around, and this frequent knocking remained the only sound. He inhaled the fragrance of her hair, her body, mixed with strange, spring pleasant and exciting smells. These embraces were not at all like friendly ones in the morning at the tavern. After a moment's hesitation, Ivan decided to kiss Mary and reached for her lips, but the girl gently pushed him and ran away carelessly.

Ivan did not catch her. He went to the tavern in silence, at the same time tormented with irresistible desire to tighten again the adorable creation and agony of conscience, because he was too harsh and assertive.

Approaching his temporary dwelling, he crept along the wooden stairs to attic, trying not to creak floorboards, and plopped down on the bed. After some time, he threw off his clothes and shoes, lay down on my back, winged eyes and began to recall all the bright impressions of the past day. Such reflections always helped to plunge into sleep smoothly.

Ivan was going to leave his room, at dawn. The guy was feeling shame and embarrassment before Mary, so he considered reasonable to write her a letter with thanks, leave on bar rack

and quietly slip away. But after it occurred to him that the girl, could not read and write, and Ivan changed his mind: it's better to explain everything with personal meeting.

In the morning he woke up with birds singing in the yard. Judging by the strumming of pots below and muffled voices, Mary was already working in the kitchen.

The young man got dressed and went down to the dining hall. The hostess was so busy doing things that not noticed him.

– Hello, Mary.

– Hello, John. How did you sleep last night? – she talked with the guest calmly as there was nothing happened between yesterday.

– Thank you, very well. Do you need any help, before I leave?

– No, thanks, nothing is needed. Drink black coffee before leaving.

– With pleasure.

This time he had breakfast very quickly, without too much hesitation – like at home, when he was hurrying in the morning to the university. After finishing his coffee, he jumped up and went to the bar counter to thank the girl for the hospitality.

– Mary, thank you for everything. Unfortunately I must go. Farewell. Do not worry. And forgive me if something was wrong. I wish you great happiness. Pass my best wishes to your father.

– Thanks, John. And you will forgive us, if anything. Have a good trip. I have no mercy on you. I will never forget you.

– For your kindness, I would like to present you something

for memory. Here are a notebook for record and a pen. They are now yours.

– John, I do not know how to read and write.

– Mary, promise me that you will learn. You are very smart and capable. Books will open the absolutely new world, exciting and mysterious. You will never be bored and lonely. Promise?

–

Yes, I will try.

He left, and she stood by the window and looked after him for a long time.

Ivan reached the lawn and did not realized how in a couple of seconds appeared in twenty-first century Moscow.

Cars resounded, gentlemen with portfolios and umbrellas scurried around. As always, high-rise buildings of concrete and glass rushed to the sky. Running hungry domestic dogs, thin homeless cats warmed themselves on the pipes. It seemed like a metropolis did not notice the Ivan's disappearance. He felt somewhere deep inside that will never be the same again.

A few days after returning to Moscow Ivan walked like in a fog: he did not speak to anyone and smoked non-stop, probably hoping that the smoke will bring relief.

Gray ringlets slowly blurred and dissolved in the air as a lonely thought that he could not catch at all. In three days Ivan realized and formulated the plan, so persistently eluding from him: "I need to go to the library and to find out all about that town and that time. Maybe, there's a mention of Mary ...".

The young man left the house early in the morning and became one of the first visitors in the library. He got a lot of thick books in color bindings. Yellowed pages exuded that special smell of antiquity and dust, which is the case with the old folios, which for a long time no one took in hands. He spent the whole day here, reading each line carefully and not noticing anything around.

Ivan travelled in time again. Despite the fact that he sat with books until the evening with little breaks for the strong coffee, he finished only a small part of the planned.

Therefore, the next day Ivan returned to the library. Librarians recognized him and smiled as to a good acquaintance. Having exchanged with them a pair of polite phrases, the young man fought in reading again. It seemed to him that he would find something very important in these historical narratives and archival documents.

In general, there were retellings of already known facts. However, in a week Ivan was lucky: in one of the books he read about a woman called Mary. She founded the first school for children from poor families and taught them to read and write. But there were no other details in the text.

That day Ivan returned home going out of his mind. The mere mention of this wonderful girl caused in him so many feelings and memories!

Charming American girl dreamed to him every night. In a dream they laughed, walked, held hands, kissed, talked with each

other about everything in the world. Ivan did not stop thinking about Mary during the day, rummaged all literature in the library in the hope of finding at least something, but indifferent pages were silent.

The young man decided that he must see the girl again, and began to study old books with spells, facilitating movement in time, albeit for a short time. Ivan became like a ghost: slept for two or three hours a day, did not even eat and spent many hours rummaging in ancient books in search of treasured words or magical ways that help to go back to Mary.



A month later he was lucky. On a worn scrap of paper he found the right spell. It was argued that with magical words on the lips and blue sapphire on the finger at midnight in full moon a person can make a temporary jump.

Ivan accurately copied a spell to a notebook – he always wore it with him to write the most important thoughts and observations.

That night was just the full moon. Throwing everything, the young man ran to the bank, withdrew from the account all available money and ran to the nearest jewelry store, hoping to be in time before shop's closing. Ivan bought a gold ring with blue sapphire, the last from the window.

Literally flown into the apartment, opened a fresh entry in the notebook and learned magic phrases by heart. Then he walked around the room: checked if water and light were turned off, whether the doors are locked. Sat on the bed, breathed deeply and whispered the spell, as prayer, tightly holding a ring in his hand.

The next morning Ivan was visited by a friend: he was worried that his friend did not appear at the university. Exams were coming ... The guy called at the door for a long time, but no one has opened it for him. Suddenly he recalled, that the neighbor who lived on the floor below, had keys to Ivan's apartment: she watered the flowers when the student visited his parents in another city.

After standing for a couple of minutes in indecisiveness,

a friend pressed the bell button. The neighbor opened it. Composing a story, that he wants to make Ivan an amazing surprise for his birthday, the guy asked a keys for fifteen minutes. The woman agreed with condition that she would accompany the unexpected guest.

They went upstairs and opened the door. The apartment was empty. There was a note on the kitchen table: "I flew for happiness. I love everyone! Maybe, I'll see you one day. Your Ivan."