

THE BOOK OF KIN by Vladimir Megré

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Chapter 1

WHO RAISES OUR CHILDREN?

There was a large sign on the office door of the private clinic giving the M.D.'s full name, along with a title indicating an advanced academic degree, and identifying him as a specialist in child psychology. He had been recommended to me as one of the best scientific minds on the subject of parent-child relationships. I had put my name down for his last appointment of the day, as I didn't want to limit the length of our consultation — if it proved useful, I was prepared to pay him extra to continue as I was in such desperate need of advice. I opened the door and walked in.

Behind the desk was seated a gentleman of retirement age with a drawn face, listlessly stuffing sheets of scribbled paper into a file. After inviting me to take a seat, the doctor placed a clean sheet of paper before him and said:

“So? How can I help you?”

To avoid getting into a long, extended story about everything that had happened after meeting with Anastasia, I did my best to put the essence of my question in a nutshell:

“Alexander Sergeevich,¹ I need to learn how to get along with my child — my son — who will soon be five years old.”

“So, you believe you have lost contact with your son?” the psychologist asked blandly and dispirit-edly.

¹*Alexander Sergeevich* — first name and patronymic, the usual polite form of address in Russian among adults.

“There has been practically no meaningful contact as such to date. The way it’s turned out, since his birth I’ve hardly had any communication with him at all. I did see him one time while he was still an infant, but after that... I haven’t talked with him even once. So, I have to say, he’s started learning about life without me. We’ve been living quite apart from each other.

“But now I’m going to have a chance to meet with my five-year-old son and actually talk with him. Maybe there are some ways to help make him favourably disposed toward me? Like when a man marries a woman who already has a child, and wants to get along with him, to become his father and friend.”

“There are ways, certainly,” Alexander Sergeevich observed, “but none which are guaranteed to be effective in all cases. There’s so much in parent-child relationships that depends on individual nature and character.”

“I realise that, but still, I’d like to become familiar with whatever specific hints you may have.”

“Specific... Hmm... When you make your appearance in the family — and you have to remember that even a single mother with a child constitutes a family — try to interfere as little as possible with the way of life they have already established. It will take some time before you become anything beyond an outsider to your son, and that’s something you’ve got to accept. At the beginning stages you will have to spend some time sizing up the whole situation AND... give them a chance to size *you* up.

“You could try tying in your appearance with the fulfilment of some dream or desire the child has had but which has been impossible to fulfil. You could find out from his mother some kind of toy he’s had his eye on which she hasn’t been able to buy for him. But don’t buy it yourself in advance. Start talking with him about your own childhood and the toys you had, and tell him how you dreamt of getting this one in particular. If he picks up on that and mentions about how he wants the same thing, then you can suggest the two of you go to the store together and get it. What’s important here is the actual conversational process, and the outing itself. The boy should get to the point of trusting you with his dream, allowing you to have a hand in making it come true.”

“The toy example really won’t work in my case. My son has never seen store-bought toys.”

“Strange... So, that won’t work, eh?... Well, my friend, you’ve got to be frank with me. If you want to hear some useful advice, then you’ll have to give more details about your relationship with your child’s mother. Who is she? Where does she work? Where does she live? What’s her family’s financial situation? What do you think led to the break-up?”

It was dawning on me, finally. If I wanted to get more specific advice out of the psychologist, I would have to go into my relations with Anastasia, which I still hadn’t fully fathomed myself, so how was I going to explain them to a psychologist?

Without mentioning her name, I began describing the situation as follows:

“She lives in a very remote area, in Siberia. I happened to make her acquaintance while I was on a trade expedition. I’ve been doing business there since the beginning of *perestroika* — on a ship which took me to some isolated settlements along the Ob River, selling various manufactured goods and bringing back fish, furs and wild mushrooms, berries and nuts.”

“I see. So, like Paratov,² this tradesman makes everyone jealous with his romantic exploits along a Siberian river?”

“No romance, just work. Haven’t you heard? Entrepreneurs work like dogs!”

“Well, let’s say they do, but... entrepreneurs also find time to have fun, do they not?”

²*Sergei Paratov* — a cynical, hard-nosed character in Alexander Ostrovsky’s drama *The dowerless bride (Bespridannitsa)*, who betrays the affections of a poor girl named Larissa in a small town on the Volga River.

“Believe me, with this woman it wasn’t a question of having fun at all. I wanted to have a child by her. I’d been wanting a son for a long time, but then I seemed to forget about that particular dream. The years went by... But as soon as I saw her — how wholesome, young and beautiful she was... It seems just about every woman today is sick or sickly, but she — well, she was simply beaming with energy, the picture of health! So I figured her child would turn out healthy and good-looking too.

“She bore me a son. I went to see them when he was still quite little, before he could walk or talk. I held him in my arms. But since then I’ve had no contact with him.”

“And why is that?”

How on earth was I to explain to this gentleman during our brief conversation everything that it had taken me several books to describe? How could I tell him that Anastasia had refused to leave her taiga glade and move with our son into town, while I on the other hand was not adapted to life in the taiga? Or that she was the one who would not let me even communicate with him, let alone give him traditional toys?

Every summer I had gone back to Siberia, to the very glade where Anastasia and my son made their home, but I never managed to see my son again after that one time. Each time he would be somewhere else — with her grandfather and great-grandfather, who lived not far away, in the wilds of the endless Siberian forest. Anastasia refused to take me to visit them, and further insisted each time that I should first prepare myself for conversation with my son.

In attempting to find out more about child-raising, I would put a single question to many of my friends and acquaintances, which was invariably greeted with misunderstanding and astonishment, even though it was quite a simple question:

“Have you ever had a serious conversation with your child?”

It would always turn out that the topics of conversation were pretty much the same: “Come to the table... Time for bed... Stop fooling around... Pick up your toys... Got your homework done?...”

The child gets older, goes to school, but talking about the meaning of life, Man’s destiny or even just about what his future path in life will be — well, most of them don’t have time for that, or even think it anything worth discussing. Maybe they feel the time isn’t right yet, that they’ll still have a chance to... But they never do. The child grows up...

But if we ourselves never even try having a serious conversation with our children, who then is raising them?

Why has Anastasia not allowed me to communicate with my very own son all these years? I have no idea what she’s been afraid of or trying to ward off.

Anyway, the day came when she all at once asked me whether I felt I was ready to meet and talk with my son. I replied that I did want to meet with him, but I still couldn’t quite bring myself to say I was ‘ready’.

All these years I had been reading anything I could lay my hands on concerning parent-child relationships. I kept writing my books, giving talks at conferences in various countries, but wrote and said almost nothing about the most important thing that interested me during all this time — the raising of children and how older generations should interact with them.

I kept thinking about all the different words of advice I had encountered in child-raising literature, but each time I would find myself coming back to what Anastasia said: “*Raising children means also raising yourself.*”³ It took me a long time to comprehend the meaning of that saying, but I finally managed to reach a definite conclusion:

Our children are not raised by parental admonition, nor by kindergartens, schools and colleges. Our children are raised by the way people live — the way we ourselves live and the way society in general lives. And no matter what kids hear from their parents or teachers in school or any other institution of learning, no matter what clever systems of education are adopted, children will follow the lifestyle practised by the majority of people around them.

That means that the raising of children depends entirely on your own understanding of the world, on how you live your own life, how your parents live and how society in general lives. A sick and unhappy society can only give birth to sick and unhappy children.

“If you don’t tell me in detail about your relationship with the mother of your son, I’ll have a hard time finding any real advice to give you!” said the psychologist, interrupting a rather lengthy pause.

“That’s a rather long story,” I mused. “To put it briefly, the way things turned out, I’ve had no communication with my son for several years, and that’s all there is to it.”

“Okay, then tell me, in all these years have you given any financial support to your child’s mother? I think, for an entrepreneur, financial support would be the simplest way to show your interest in the family.”

“No, I haven’t. She believes she is fully provided for.”

“So, she’s a wealthy woman, then?”

“Let’s just say she has everything she needs.”

Alexander Sergeevich rose sharply from behind his desk and blurted out:

“She lives in the Siberian taiga. She lives the life of a recluse. Her name is Anastasia, your son’s name is Volodya,⁴ and you are Vladimir Nikolaevich Megré. I recognise you. I’ve read your books — more than once, in fact.”

“Yes...”

Alexander Sergeevich started pacing the room excitedly. Then he began talking again:

“Well, well, well! I was right, eh? I guessed it! So, would you please answer me one thing. I need an answer! It’s very important to me. To science... But no, don’t answer. I’ll say it myself. I’m beginning to understand... I’m sure that all these years since you first met Anastasia you’ve been doing intensive studies in psychology and philosophy. You’ve been constantly thinking about child-raising. Am I right?”

“Yes.”

“But the conclusions you reached after reading these ‘scholarly’ books and articles did not satisfy you. And so you started looking for answers within yourself, or in other words, you started reflecting on the rising generation, on child-raising?”

“More or less. But most of all about my son.”

“That’s an inseparable part of it. You came to see me in desperation, and without too much hope for answers to the questions you’ve come up with. And if you don’t get them from me, you’ll go on searching on your own.”

“Probably.”

“So... Amazing! I’m going to mention the name of someone who is immeasurably stronger and wiser than me in all this.”

³See Book 4, Chapter 30: “In His image and likeness”.

⁴*Volodya* — an endearing form of the name *Vladimir*.

“Who is that person and how can I arrange an appointment?”

“That person is none other than your Anastasia, Vladimir Nikolaevich!”

“Anastasia? But she’s hardly said anything about child-raising lately. And she’s the one who wouldn’t let me communicate with my son.”

“That’s just it — she’s the one. And up to this moment I haven’t been able to find any logical explanation for this decision on her part. Such strange behaviour! A loving woman suddenly announces to the father-to-be that he shouldn’t communicate with his own son. A most irregular situation — never come across it before. But the result!... The result is simply amazing! You see, she’s succeeded in making you... No, that word isn’t applicable here. Anastasia’s succeeded in attracting... And who? If you will pardon me, she’s made a not-very-well-educated entrepreneur get interested in psychology, philosophy and the problems of child-raising. You’ve been thinking about that through the years — I can tell as much just by the simple fact that you came to see me. She’s been raising your son all these years by herself, but at the same time she’s also been educating you! She’s been preparing you for this meeting of father and son.”

“Yes, she actually has been raising our son alone. As for educating me, I don’t think so. We don’t get together all that often. And only for a brief time.”

“But that information she gives you, even during those ‘brief’ moments, as you say, you’re still having to sort out even today. The information is truly amazing. You, Vladimir Nikolaevich, say that Anastasia rarely talks about child-raising, but that isn’t so.”

Alexander Sergeevich quickly went over to his desk and pulled a thick grey notebook out of one of the drawers. Tenderly stroking it in his hands, he continued:

“I took all Anastasia’s sayings in your books about the birth and raising of children and wrote them out in order, leaving out the details of the plot. Maybe, though, it wasn’t right to take these quotations out of context. After all, there’s no doubt the plot makes them a lot easier to comprehend.

“These sayings of Anastasia’s are fraught with great meaning — a great philosophical meaning, I would say, and wisdom from an ancient culture. I’m inclined to suppose — and I’m not alone here — that these principles are set forth in some kind of ancient book, maybe millions of years old. What Anastasia says has the kind of depth to it and the accuracy of expression that one associates with what I think are the most important thoughts set forth in ancient manuscripts, as well as modern scholarly works.

“After I had written out everything I could find concerning the birth and raising of children, what I had before me amounted to a treatise with no equal anywhere in the world. I am sure it will be used as the basis for a great number of dissertations and awardings of academic degrees, along with amazing discoveries. But even more importantly, it will give rise to a new race on the Earth known as *Man!*”

“But *Man*⁵ already exists right now.”

“I think, when people look back from the future, the fact of *Man*’s existence may be in some doubt.”

“How can that be? You and I exist. How can our existence ever be placed in doubt?”

“Our bodies exist, and we call them *people*. But in the future the content, or mental makeup of the human individual will be vastly different from yours and mine today, and so to underline the difference,

⁵*Man* — Throughout the Ringing Cedars Series, the word *Man* with a capital *M* is used to refer to a human being of either gender. For details on the word’s usage and the important distinction between *Man* and *human being* please see the Translator’s Preface to Book 1.

the name will have to be changed. Possibly today's people will be called 'Such-and-such-a-period Man', or else they'll find a new name for those who are born in the future."

"Is it really that bad?"

"It is — no question about it. You've gone and read a lot of books about child-raising — books written by scholars. Now tell me, at what point does child-raising begin?"

"Some writers think it should begin when the child's a year old."

"Precisely. At best, starting at a year old. But Anastasia showed how Man is formed even before... I know you're thinking 'in the mother's womb'. But she showed that parents can form their future offspring even before the sperm and the egg get together. And this is explainable scientifically. Anastasia stands head and shoulders above all other psychologists who exist or have ever existed on the Earth. Her sayings are potent, they cover all stages of the development and the raising of the child — the pre-conceptual, the conceptual, the foetal stage and so forth.

"She covers topics which neither wise men of the past nor contemporary scholars have been able to grasp hold of. She has specifically highlighted what is absolutely essential to bearing and raising a fully fledged Man."

"But that's not something I remember. I never wrote about developmental stages."

"The books you wrote just documented the events you witnessed. Anastasia realised that that is just how you would be writing. Her next move was that she herself began giving specific form to these events, effectively clothing a great scientific work in an entertaining narrative form. She created your book with her very life, using it to bring invaluable knowledge to people.

"Most readers feel this intuitively. Many are ecstatic over the books, but they are unable to fully make sense of the cause of their excitement. They are absorbing information they never knew about before, on a subconscious level. But it can be taken in consciously too. I'll prove it to you.

"Look, here before you is a transcript of Anastasia's sayings about the birth of a Man. My colleague and I have gone over them very carefully and noted down our comments. He is a sexopathologist with a post-graduate degree in medicine, and has the office next to mine. We conducted experiments and analysed the situation."

Alexander Sergeevich opened his notebook and began speaking excitedly, almost exultantly:

"So, we have the beginning... The *pre-conceptual stage*. This is hardly ever looked upon as an aspect of child-raising, either in the present time or in the past as we know it. But it is quite clear today that at some point on the Earth, or somewhere in the limitless expanses of the Universe, there existed or still exists a culture in which the relationships between men and women were immeasurably more perfected than our own. And that the pre-conceptual stage was an important component — perhaps the basic component — in the upbringing of Man.

"Following the cultural traditions of a civilisation hitherto unknown to us, Anastasia carries out specific preparatory steps before conceiving a child. First, she dulls your sexual appetite. This is quite evident to me as a psychologist from the events described in your first book. Let me remind you of the order in which these events take place.

"During a rest stop on your trek through the taiga, you drink some cognac and have a bite to eat, but Anastasia does not respond to your offer of food and alcohol. She takes off her outer clothing and lies down on the grass. You are awed by her natural beauty, and you are aroused by a natural desire to possess this beautiful womanly body. Driven by a sexual impulse, you attempt to penetrate her, you touch her body and then... you lose consciousness.

“We shan’t go into the details of just how she manages to make you lose consciousness. The important thing is that as a result of this you no longer look upon Anastasia as a sexual object. And you yourself mention this — I wrote down your words: ‘I had no thought of wanting to possess her.’”⁶

“Yes. You’re right — after the incident at the rest stop I had no further sexual desires in regard to Anastasia.”

“Now to the *second event* — *conception* — you tell about the proper way to conceive a child.

“Night-time in a cosy dug-out, with the fragrance of sweet grass and flowers. But you are not accustomed to spending the night alone in the taiga, and you ask Anastasia to lie down beside you. You already realise that if she is with you nothing bad will happen. She lies down beside you.

“So it turns out that in this intimate situation you find this most beautiful young womanly body right next to yours — a body which has the added attraction of being radiant with health. Unlike most women’s bodies you have known before, this one actually luxuriates in health. You sense the fragrance of Anastasia’s breath, yet at the same time you feel no sexual inclination. It has been expelled from you. The space it occupied has been cleansed to make way for another mental state — an aspiration to ensure the continuation of the family line. You are thinking about a son! A son that doesn’t yet exist. This is what you wrote in your book:

“‘It would be good if my son could be borne by Anastasia! She is so healthy. That means my son will be healthy and good-looking too.’”⁷

“You involuntarily place your hand on Anastasia’s breast and start caressing it, but not with the same caresses as before. This time they are not sexual. It is as though you are caressing your son. Then you write about the touch of the lips, about Anastasia’s gentle breathing, and then — a complete lack of any kind of details. Then you jump to describing the following morning, your excellent mood, and the feeling that an extraordinary feat has been performed.

“I wouldn’t be surprised if your publishers tried to persuade you to describe that night in greater detail, to increase the book’s popularity.”

“Yes, they actually did try to do this, several times.”

“But still, you did not describe that night in any of the subsequent editions of your book — why?”

“Because —”

“Stop! Please, don’t go on. I want to see if my own conclusions are correct. You did not describe the sexual details of that night because you simply didn’t remember anything after touching Anastasia’s lips.”

“You’re right, to this day I can’t remember anything about it. Except for that unusual sensation the following morning.”

“What I’m going to say to you now you may find incredible. On that marvellous night you spent with Anastasia, absolutely no sex took place.”

“No sex? But what about my son? I saw my son with my own eyes.”

“What you experienced that night was indeed physical intimacy. There was sperm involved — in fact, everything that accompanies the conception of children, but there was no sex. My colleagues and I kept going over and over what happened with you. Just like me, they too concluded that you did not have sex with Anastasia.

⁶Quoted from Book 1, Chapter 9: “Who lights a new star?”.

⁷Quoted (with slight variations) from Book 1, Chapter 9.

“You see, the word *sex* in our time implies the satisfaction of fleshly needs, the aspiration for the pleasure of fleshly gratification. But in the context of the events of that night in the taiga, that particular motivation was lacking — in other words, you were not aiming to achieve sexual satisfaction. This time your aim was quite different — namely, a child. Consequently, even the name of that event must be different. It’s not just a question of terminology here — we are talking about a fundamentally different way of giving birth to Man.

“I’ll say it again: *this is a fundamentally different way of giving birth to Man*. This is not an abstract statement — it is easily provable by means of scientific comparisons. Judge for yourself: no psychologist or physiologist today would deny the influence of external mental factors on the formation of the foetus in the mother’s womb. Among other factors a major one (and frequently the dominant one) is the man’s attitude toward the mother-to-be. Similarly, we cannot deny that a man’s thoughts about a woman at the moment of their sexual intimacy has an unmistakable influence on the formation of the future individual. In one instance he is thinking of her as an object of sexual gratification. In the other he looks upon her as a co-creator. The result will naturally be different. It is possible that the child born under such circumstances will be just as strikingly different intellectually from contemporary Man as contemporary Man is different from the ape.

“Sex and the pleasure associated with it during the moment of co-creation is not an end in itself, but merely a means to an end. Other mental energies will govern the couple’s bodies, and the child’s psyche will be formed quite differently.

“Here is the first rule following from what I have said: a female desiring to bear a fully fledged Man and create a solid and happy family must be able to capture the moment at which the male wishes to join with her for the purpose of giving birth to a Man, cherishes the image of their child-to-be and desires its birth.

“Under these conditions the man and the woman achieve a mental state which allows them to obtain the highest possible satisfaction from their intimacy. And the child-to-be obtains a kind of energy which is absent in those who are born in the traditional manner — i.e., haphazardly.”

“But how does the woman feel this moment? How is she to know about the man’s thoughts? Thoughts, after all, are not something you can see.”

“Caresses! That’s how she can tell. The mental state is always expressing itself through outward signs. Joy is shown in smiles and laughter, sorrow in a telltale expression of the eyes, position of the body etc. In this particular case, I think, it is not too hard to distinguish purely sexual caresses from the way he would touch his future child. Only with this kind of touch a certain ‘something’ happens that Man alone, of all the creatures living on the Earth, can experience. Nobody will ever be able to describe or scientifically explain this ‘something’. At the moment when it occurs any kind of analysis is impossible.

“As a psychologist, I can only assume that what is paramount in such an event is not the coming together of two physical bodies, but something immeasurably greater: the merging of two thoughts into one. More specifically: the merging of two complexes of feelings into one. The pleasure and bliss experienced through this are significantly superior to mere sexual gratification. Its continuity is not fleeting as with ordinary sex. The inexplicable pleasant feeling that it brings can last for months and even years. This is what makes a strong and loving family. This is what Anastasia is talking about.

“This also means that once the man has experienced it, he cannot bring himself to exchange the new sensation for mere sexual gratification. He will not be able to, or even desire to, betray his wife — his

beloved. That is the moment that marks the beginning of the formation of the family. A happy family!

“There is a saying that ‘marriages are made in heaven’. The saying is quite true in respect to this particular case. Judge for yourself. What is generally considered today to attest to a heavenly marriage? A scrap of paper issued by the Civil Records Office, or all sorts of church rituals. Funny, isn’t it? Funny, yet at the same time sad.

“Anastasia is quite right when she says that a marriage made in heaven can only be affirmed by the couple’s extraordinarily splendid mental state, which leads to the birth of a new and fully fledged Man.

“And I might add that the majority of children born today are born out of wedlock... And now... Now I’d like to read to you some comments made by my colleague, the sexopathologist:

The mutual sexual relations between a man and a woman as described in the book Anastasia, bring out a whole new meaning of sex. All currently existing textbooks on the subject, beginning with those of Ancient India and Greece right up to our contemporary treatises, may be seen as naïve and ridiculous in comparison to the significance of what Anastasia has to say. All the research described in all known works on sex, both ancient and modern, is focused solely on discovering various body positions, caressing techniques and sexual aids. But people have different physiological and psychological abilities and capabilities.

For any given individual there may be just a single most effective and acceptable position and just one particular sex aid that will match his character and temperament.

One would be hard put to find anywhere in the world a specialist capable of pinpointing with any degree of accuracy the most appropriate technique (out of the thousands of possibilities) in the case of a particular individual.

To carry out such a task the specialist would need to know the thousands of existing techniques with all their nuances, and study the physical and mental abilities of the individual in question, and that is patently impossible.

Evidence that the questions raised in regard to men and women’s sexual relations have not been solved by modern science may be seen in the ever-increasing loss of potency on the part of the majority of men and women in today’s society. There is a growing number of sexually dissatisfied family couples. But this joyless picture can be changed.

Anastasia has shown that there exists in Nature some kind of mechanism, some kind of higher power capable of solving a seemingly insoluble problem in an instant. Through a couple’s — a man and a woman’s — specific mental state, this mechanism or power will help them find the conditions and techniques of sexual intercourse appropriate solely to them.

Undoubtedly, the pleasure experienced in this particular case will achieve the highest level attainable. It is quite possible that the man and woman who have experienced such satisfaction will maintain their conjugal fidelity for ever, quite independently of the dictates of laws and rituals.

“Conjugal fidelity! Conjugal infidelity. Betrayal.”

Alexander Sergeevich got up from behind his desk and continued to talk while standing.

“Anastasia was the first to show the nature of this phenomenon. I remember by heart not only isolated phrases, but whole monologues. Listen to what she says:⁸

⁸This and subsequent quotations (unless otherwise indicated) are taken from Book 1, Chapter 9: “Who lights a new star?”.

They try all sorts of tricks to persuade people that satisfaction is something you can easily obtain, thinking only of carnal desire. And at the same time they separate Man from truth. The poor deceived women who are ignorant of this spend their lives accepting nothing but suffering and searching for the grace they have lost. But they are searching for it in the wrong places. No woman can restrain a man from fornication if she allows herself to submit to him merely to satisfy his carnal needs.

“And again... I’ll have it in a moment... Yes, here it is:

They will strive to possess body after body, or make paltry and fateful use of their own bodies, realising only intuitively that they are drifting farther and farther away from the true happiness of a true union!

“Here is an absolutely accurate explanation of the cause of conjugal infidelity. I can also explain it as a psychologist. It’s all quite logical: a man and a woman — the so-called husband and wife — engage in sex just for the sake of sex. When they intuitively feel they are not getting sufficient satisfaction, they turn to a specialist and read supplementary literature on the subject. They are advised to try various positions and ways of caressing each other — in other words, to engage in a search for greater satisfaction through switching sexual techniques.

“Note what I said — ‘engage in a search’. They may not say this explicitly, but if they themselves, as Anastasia has correctly pointed out, have an intuition about the existence of a higher happiness, they will engage in a search. But... where are the limits of this search? Is it just limited to a change of positions? The logical next step is a change of bodies.

“‘Aha!’ society cries. ‘That’s conjugal betrayal!’ But there’s no betrayal going on here. There’s no betrayal, because there is no married couple!

“A marriage dependent on a scrap of paper is not a marital union. It is nothing but a convention thought up by society.

“A marital union should be established by a man and a woman through their attainment of the highest mental state Anastasia describes. She not only talked about it, she showed how to achieve it. This is an entirely new culture in male-female relationships.”

“Does that mean, Alexander Sergeevich, that you are recommending young people engage in intimate relations before a marriage is officially recognised?”

“Most people today are doing just that. Only we’re ashamed to talk about it openly. But what I am proposing is to *refrain from engaging in sex just for the sake of sex, either before or after the marriage is registered.*

“We consider ourselves a free society. We have the possibility of freely engaging in debauchery. And oh, how we engage in it!

“Debauchery has become a whole industry. Look at the cinema and the endless stream of all kinds of pornography, look at prostitution or the rubberised dolls you can buy at sex-shops. What more evidence do you need?!

“In the face of this whole sexual orgy, which only attests to the failure of modern science to understand the nature and function of the mechanisms involved in the union of two people, Anastasia’s words come as a discovery — literally a revelation!

“As a psychologist I have been able to appreciate the grandness of Anastasia’s discovery. She has brought to light a whole new culture in male-female relationships.

“The primary role in them is taken on by the woman. Anastasia has succeeded in bringing you, too, to the understanding of this culture. She has been able to do this, using — intuitively, perhaps — the knowledge of some kind of ancient civilisation. But... we — or rather, my colleague — he has proved it in practice. He has proved that even a man can...

“He’s a sexopathologist. He and I have worked together to analyse Anastasia’s sayings. He was the first to talk about the new culture in relationships that has been unknown up to now. He was especially struck by this saying — you should remember it — she said:

...who — what individual — would want to come into the world as a result of carnal pleasures alone? We would all like to be created under a great impulsion of love, the aspiration to creation itself, and not simply come into the world as a result of someone’s carnal pleasure.

But that is precisely how our children have come into the world — as the result of carnal pleasure. My wife and I wanted a child, so we had sex. I don’t even know which day it was my wife conceived. It wasn’t until after she became pregnant that we started thinking more specifically about the child. But Anastasia says that a particular mental state and aspiration is required right at the very moment preceding intimacy. Anyway, my colleague, no doubt, got more out of those sayings of hers than I. Or he felt more. He wanted to experience this mental state. He wanted them to have a child — a son.

“My colleague is already past forty, and his wife is two years younger than he. They have two children. He himself admitted that they have rarely had any sex these past few years. But he began talking with his wife about a child.

“At first she was quite surprised at his desire. She said it was too late for her to bear children. But her attitude toward her husband took a turn for the better. He gave her the book with Anastasia’s sayings to read. And now the woman herself would start a conversation — no, not about her desire to have a child, but about how true the sayings in the book were.

“And then one night my colleague began caressing his wife — only not thinking about sex, but about their future son. He probably managed to do the same thing you did. The only difference is that you were led to that point by Anastasia, while he achieved it all on his own. Whether it just happened that way or not, it’s hard to say, but he managed to achieve, in all probability, precisely the mental state you experienced. His wife responded with the same kind of caresses.

“These are not young people, and naturally they were not feeling the same strong sexual inclinations as in their youth. Their thoughts about their future child, no doubt, pushed any concerns about sexual techniques into the background.

“As a result... as a result, that ‘something’ happened. Neither my colleague nor his wife could remember any of the details of their intimacy. Just like you, they don’t remember anything. But, as you did, they talk about the unforgettable, marvellous sensations they experienced the next morning. My colleague tells me that he has never felt anything like it in all his life, from intimacy either with his wife or with any other women — and, believe me, there were quite a few of those.

“His forty-year-old wife is now pregnant, in her seventh month. But that’s not the main thing. The main thing is that his wife has fallen in love.”

“With whom?”

“With her husband, my dear Vladimir Nikolaevich! Just imagine, here’s this woman who used to be rather irritable and nagging, now coming to our clinic and waiting for her husband to finish work. She sits in the reception room and waits like a young girl newly in love. I have often caught the expression on her face out of the corner of my eye. It too has changed, and a barely noticeable hidden smile is now evident.

“I’ve known this family quite some time. About eight years. This plump, depressed woman has suddenly become ten years younger. And she is beautiful, in spite of her all-too-obvious pregnancy.”

“What about your colleague’s attitude toward his wife — has it changed too, or has it remained the same?”

“He’s changed too. He’s completely given up drinking, even though he didn’t really have a serious problem with it before. He’s stopped smoking. He and his wife have a new favourite pastime — painting.”

“Painting? What do they paint?”

“They paint their future family domain, the kind Anastasia talks about. They want to get a piece of land and build on it — wrong word: not to build a house, but to lay the foundation for a future corner of Paradise for their children-to-be.”

“You said, *children-to-be*?”

“Exactly. His wife’s only regret is that the conception took place in an apartment, and not in their own domain, as Anastasia recommends — in the Space of Love built with their own hands, where the woman should stay during the whole period of her pregnancy and where the birth should take place.

“My colleague’s wife is convinced she can have still another child beyond this one. And my colleague thinks so too.

“I am convinced that the instinct one finds among animals to perpetuate the species differs from the human condition in the fact that the animals’ mating is governed only by the call of nature. When Man engages in so-called sex, he is merely imitating the animals. A child brought into the world as the result of this process is half-man, half-animal.

“A true Man can be born only when the energies and feelings inherent in Man alone are involved — i.e., love, a vision of the future, an awareness of what is being created. In fact, the word *sex* isn’t really applicable at all. It only trivialises the event taking place. The term *co-creation* is much more accurate here.

“When a man and a woman achieve the mental state where co-creation takes place, it is at that point that they enter into a marriage made in heaven. This is not a union sealed by a scrap of paper or a ritual, but by something immeasurably greater and more meaningful, and hence it will be solid and happy.

“And you mustn’t think that only young people can enter into a union like this. The example of my colleague shows that it is available to people of all ages. Such a union is possible only on the condition that they themselves are able to comprehend the significance of what Anastasia has set forth.”

“So what does all this mean?” I asked. “Does it mean that all the people whose passport⁹ is stamped with a marriage registration aren’t married after all?”

“A passport stamp is nothing but a convention thought up by society. The pieces of paper and all the rituals practised by different peoples in different historical periods may be outwardly different, but in

⁹*passport* — in this case, an internal document issued by the Russian government as proof of one’s identity, which includes a record of marriage where applicable.

essence they all amount to the same thing — an attempt to impress the mind and artificially create at least an appearance of union among two people. As Anastasia correctly points out:

A false union is a frightening thing.

Children! Do you see, Vladimir? Children! They sense the artificiality, the falsity of such a union. And this makes them sceptical about everything their parents tell them. Children sub-consciously sense the lie even during their conception. And that has a bad effect on them.

“It turns out that in Nature there is not an artificial, but a natural, Divine union. And Anastasia has shown people living today how it can be achieved.”

“So what you’re saying is that even people who are married — even the ones with a stamp to that effect in their passport — should really be marrying their spouse a second time?”

“Not the *second* time, but *for the first time in actual fact*, it would be more accurate to say,” observed Alexander Sergeevich.

“That’s going to be a hard one for most people to understand. In every country of the world sex is held up as the highest form of pleasure, and every last individual engages in it for the sake of pleasure.”

“All a lie, Vladimir Nikolaevich! Ninety percent of men are incapable of satisfying a woman.

“The myth that the majority of people derive supreme delight from sex is nothing but a psychological suggestion. Human beings’ appetite for sex is the basis of a whole commercial industry. The flood of legal and underground porno-magazines is a veritable gold-mine. And they know how to pull the wool over people’s eyes. Films where all sorts of supermen freely satisfy their partners — that’s all business too.

“The simple fact is: we are too timid and too afraid to admit to each other that we don’t have the right partner. But the fact remains — an indisputable fact — that sixty percent of marriages do not last. And the other forty percent are far from perfect, as is evidenced by continual spousal betrayals and the tremendous increase in prostitution.

“The gratification we derive from sexual experiences today is hardly satisfying. It is no more than an infinitesimal part of the satisfaction Man experiences from the genuine co-creation appointed by God, in partnership with Him — something we search in vain for all our lives.

“*We’re ‘searching for it in the wrong places’!* The truth of this saying is indisputably borne out in our very lives.

“Anastasia represents a culture of some kind of ancient civilisation which our historians probably haven’t the faintest concept of. She completely destroys prevailing stereotypes. Just how perfect this culture was can be seen by considering how it dealt with pregnant women, who upon conception were expected to stay in the same place for nine months, and give birth there. How important is this?

“The advantage of this policy can be corroborated by information from modern science and comparative analysis. The place where the mother conceives and carries her child-to-be is termed a *domain*. In this domain a man and a woman have established a garden with their own hands, a garden containing all sorts of plants. Physiologists recognise the importance of proper nourishment for pregnant women — this has been written up in dozens of scientific and popular publications. But what of it? Is it necessary for every pregnant woman to study these? Just forget about everything else and set about studying the literature on the subject? That would be rather hard to swallow!

“Even if every single pregnant woman took to studying these scientific treatises, she would inevitably be faced with another insoluble problem: where could she obtain the products recommended?”

“Let’s suppose a couple had unlimited funds at their disposal and could buy whatever they liked. *An illusion!* No money will or even can buy what a pregnant woman desires, and right at the very moment she desires it. I’m thinking, for example, of an apple of the quality a woman can pick in her own garden and eat on the spot.

“Then there are the psychological considerations, which are no less important than the physiological. Let’s take and compare two situations.

“The first is a standard scenario, which happens with the vast majority of people. Let’s take a young family with an average or slightly-above-average income. A pregnant woman lives with her husband in a flat. Is she able to feed herself with the proper quality of food? No! Modern supermarkets, even those with upscale prices, are unable to offer us good-quality food. Tinned or frozen foods are *not* something natural for Man.

“Well, what about the farmers’ markets, then? Even there the quality is doubtful, to put it mildly. Private farmers too have learnt to use all sorts of chemical additives in raising their crops. When they’re growing things for themselves, that’s one thing, but when they’re growing to sell, that’s when their desire to make money pushes them to use all sorts of stimulating devices. Everyone knows about it, and so there is naturally a feeling of concern and alarm over using food from unknown sources.

“A feeling of alarm! A feeling that has become modern Man’s bosom companion!

“Pregnant women today are overwhelmed by an endless flood of information about constant social cataclysms and ecological disasters. Both her consciousness and sub-conscious become home to an ever-increasing fear over the future of her child-to-be. Where can we possibly find anything positive to counteract it? There are no positive aspects — indeed, under the monstrous circumstances of contemporary life we have doomed ourselves to, there cannot be.

“Even in a comfortably appointed apartment we get used to our surroundings and they cease to delight our eye with anything new. We also get used to everything in the apartment ageing and breaking, even as we are accustomed to our tap water being undrinkable.

“All this all of a sudden starts to weigh upon a pregnant woman’s acute sensibilities. All she can do is to hope for a miracle. Under the constant pressure of hopelessness, this is the most she can count on.

“In the second scenario, the woman is surrounded by a Space of Love, as Anastasia terms it, where in addition to the satisfaction of her physiological needs she is also given a powerful psychological boost.

“Modern science is capable of explaining and demonstrating the truth of practically every one of Anastasia’s sayings. They are altogether simple and logical. The only wonder is that in spite of all our studied speeches on the subject we have never given them much heed.

“But Anastasia also talks about mysterious phenomena that modern science cannot explain:¹⁰

Parents should impart to their co-creation the three most important points, the three primary planes of being.

“She further says that for all three planes of being to merge into one in one spot, namely, in one’s family domain, the following must occur:

¹⁰These passages are quoted (with a slight variation) from Book 4, Chapter 30: “In His image and likeness”.

The thoughts of two in love will merge into one... Here is the first point — it is called parental thought... The second point, or rather, yet another human plane, will be born and light a new star in the heavens when two bodies merge into one — merge in love and with thoughts of a splendid creation... And a third point, a new plane of being should come about in that space. Right there on the spot where the conception occurred the birth should take place. And the father should stay close around. And the great all-loving Father will raise over the three of them a crown.

“I am certain that physiologists and psychologists will be able to explain the advantages of conceiving, carrying and giving birth to a child all in the same spot — in a splendid kin’s domain. But Anastasia talks about something even greater. She says that in such a case the individual who is born experiences a complete connection with the Universe. Why? How does it happen? How important is this approach to a child’s birth for his future as a Man? Scholars today can only guess.

“I tried juxtaposing what Anastasia said with the prognostications of the horoscopes that are popular today. The question naturally arose, which of the three points Anastasia mentions is the most important constituent of a Man’s birth — the thought, the physiological conception or the emerging of the infant from the mother’s womb?

“It is generally accepted today that one’s birthdate is defined by the moment of emergence from the mother’s womb. This is what horoscopes are based on. But science has already determined that the foetus, even before it has emerged from the womb, is alive, it has feelings. And if that is so, then the Man already exists. He is already born. He can move — the mother can feel the push of his little legs and arms. Perhaps, then, it would be more accurate to calculate a Man’s birthdate from the moment the sperm fertilises the egg? Certainly from the physiological point of view, this could be considered the most accurate defining moment of somebody’s ‘birth’. But...

“The meeting of the sperm and the egg is still not a cause — it is an effect. It is preceded by the couple’s thoughts. Could it be that *these thoughts* define one’s birthdate? Of the three moments we have mentioned, it is generally accepted today that one’s birthdate is the moment of emergence into the world. Tomorrow, though, the calculation could be different.

“According to Anastasia’s theory, Man’s birthdate is the point where these three moments merge into one. And here may be seen her irrefutable logic. But we (and here I am referring to religious teachings as well as modern science) are afraid even to mention this.”

“What is there to be afraid of?” I queried.

“There *is* something, actually... You see, Vladimir Nikolaevich, if we accept the irrefutability of Anastasia’s statements, then we are obliged to admit that by comparison with the people of the culture she represents, we are not fully fledged people. Most of us today are lacking one or two of the components inherent in a fully fledged Man. So that’s why we’re afraid not just to talk about it, but even to think about it. And yet we should be thinking about it...”

“But perhaps we don’t think or talk about these statements because they’re too controversial?”

“On the contrary! They are too *uncontroversial* — they are incontrovertible!

“*First*, think about this: who will deny that a situation where thought rather than debauchery precedes the birth of a child — the meeting of the sperm and the egg — is more moral and more psychologically fulfilling?

“*Second*: it is also absolutely indisputable that a pregnant woman should receive a wholesome variety of nourishment and avoid stress. One’s own family domain, as Anastasia describes it, is ideal for this.

“*Third*: giving birth in familiar surroundings, in a setting one is accustomed to, will create a much more favourable condition for the birthing mother and, more importantly, for the newborn. This is also an irrefutable fact in both psychology and physiology. Now, are you in agreement with these three points so far?”

“Of course I am.”

“You see, they are indeed irrefutable, and not only for scholars. Consequently, we cannot deny the positive influence produced by the union of these three positive components into a single whole.

“As a psychologist, I can conjecture that in such a union, a psychic reaction takes place in space. The whole Space of the Universe reacts to it — accepting the newborn and establishing an information link with him.”

“Possibly. But what is the significance here of establishing an exact birthdate for Man?”

“A tremendous significance! A global significance! This is what determines the level at which we perceive the world. If we give priority to the emergence of the foetus into the world, that means *matter* is primary in our world-view.

“If on the other hand we give priority to the moment at which the man’s and woman’s thoughts merge together, then *consciousness* takes precedence in our world-view.

“The upshot is that we are dealing with the formation of two different cultures which determine our way of life. In the first instance *matter* takes predominance, in the second, it is *spirituality*. This conflict has been going on for ages, either openly or below the surface. But now I am beginning to see the absurdity of such a conflict. Anastasia talks about the merging not only of these two concepts, but of a third as well, into a single whole. On the basis of her statements one can postulate not only a *theory* of the birth of a fully fledged Man, but also the possibility of its realisation in practice. It comes right down to something that is available to everyone. But why do we not take advantage of the opportunities we have? Why is there chaos in our consciousness, and why does life evaporate into vanity? — there’s the question!”

“I still think,” I said, “you should use the date and hour when the infant emerges into the world from the mother’s womb as one’s birthdate. Only phrase it more accurately: ‘the moment of emergence into the world’.”

“Possibly. Quite possibly! But as to the moment of the birth itself, I still think you’d better ask Anastasia.”

“I shall indeed ask her. I’ll be interested to know myself exactly when I was born, and when my son was born.”

“Oh, your son! You came to me asking for advice, and here I’ve been rambling on about my own — Sorry, I got talking too much. It’s something that’s been nagging at me. You see, I hold consultation three times a week. People come to me with their problems.

“They all ask the same kinds of questions: *How to raise a child? How do I establish contact with my son or daughter?* And the child may be already five, or ten or even fifteen years old.

“If I tell someone: ‘Well, old chap, it’s too late to think about raising them now!’, then I’m killing his last hope. So my real task is basically one of comforting.”

“Well, my son too will soon be five years old. Does that mean it’s too late for me too?”

“You, Vladimir Nikolaevich, are in quite a different situation. Your son’s got Anastasia watching out for him. It’s just as well she prevented you from tossing your child out into the routine of our world. She’s raising him in the context of a totally different culture.”

“Does that mean my son and I are of different cultures, and so we’ll never be able to understand each other?”

“Parents and children always represent what seem to be different cultures, different world-views. Each generation has its own priorities. Granted, the distinction is generally not so sharp as in your case. My advice to you is this: before attempting to communicate with your son, have a talk with Anastasia about how best to approach it. Pay careful attention to whatever she says. After all, you’ve been reading a lot and thinking a lot about the raising of children. Now it’ll be easier for you to understand her.”

“Understanding her doesn’t always work out,” I countered, “even after a long time goes by. Some of her sayings still provoke doubts in me. They are mystical and not the kind you can prove. In fact, I’ve deliberately refrained from publishing a lot of her sayings — a lot of them sound more like fantasy and —”

Alexander Sergeevich suddenly banged the palm of his hand down on the table and sharply — even somewhat rudely — interrupted me:

“You’ve no right to do that. If your mind won’t allow you to make sense of something, at least give others the opportunity.”

I did not appreciate the psychologist’s sharp tone of voice or his message. This wasn’t the first time I had heard or read such accusations directed at me. They would reduce me to some kind of half-wit and say that my role was no more than transcribing as accurately as possible everything this Siberian recluse had said. But in making such statements these smart alocs weren’t taking the whole picture into account. I decided to put this suddenly aggressive psychologist in his place:

“Naturally you count yourself among those — those others, who are able to understand everything she says. I may not be a psychologist with an academic degree, but there is one simple truth even I can comprehend: if I were to publish all her mystical sayings without back-up evidence, people would be inclined to treat everything written in the books as a fairy tale. And all the practical stuff that can be put into practice today would get lost. By not publishing some of her mystical sayings, it is quite possible that I have saved the practical message she has for people.”

“Can you tell me specifically what kind of ‘mystical sayings’ you’re talking about?”

“Well, here’s a good example. She said that she’s taken the best combination of sounds in the Universe and hidden them in the text of the book and they will have a beneficial influence on the readers.”¹¹

“Yes, I remember that. I remember it very well. It’s written right in the first book. It also says there that the effect is increased if the reader listens to natural sounds while reading.”

“You remember that, eh? And the fact that these words can be found not only in the text itself, but right at the front of the book. Remember? The publishers suggested I put them there, to intrigue the readers. And I did...”

“And rightly so.”

“You think so? But you know, that particular saying right up front turned a lot of people off the book. Many saw it as just an advertising gimmick, and said so in the media. I removed it in some of the editions. Many people consider it mystical, or just something made up.”

“Idiots! Don’t tell me... Don’t tell me the mind of society can atrophy to that extent! Or has mental laziness switched off any logical thinking on the part of the masses?”

“What’s mental laziness got to do with it? If the saying is impossible to prove?”

¹¹See Book 1, Chapter 27: “Across the dark forces’ window of time”.

“*Prove?* What is there to prove? This saying is nothing if not a psychological test ingenious in its simplicity and effectiveness. It has the power to identify at a single glance complete dullards with atrophied mental capacities. If they go ahead and mention this in the media, it’ll be as though they’re saying: *Look at what utter klutzes we are!* A most ingenious test, indeed.”

“What’s this about a test? The saying in question is simply not provable.”

“Not provable, you say? Well, it’s not a matter of proving anything. What Anastasia says here is an axiom. Judge for yourself. The text of any book — and I mean *any* book, any letter, any oral speech — consists precisely of combinations of sounds. Does that make sense? Do you agree?”

“Well, yes, in general, I agree. It’s true that the texts of all books are made up of combinations...”

“You see how simple it all is? It is this very simplicity that people who are too lazy to think logically have stumbled over.”

“Possibly... But, after all, she did say she had found and collected the best combinations from the expanses of the Universe and that they would exercise a beneficial effect on the readers.”

“But there is absolutely nothing ‘mystical’ in that. Judge for yourself: when you read any kind of book, or newspaper or magazine article, doesn’t it have an effect on you? The reading can leave you indifferent, provoke irritation, satisfaction, anger or joy. Well? Get it? D’you agree?”

“Yes.”

“Okay. As for the beneficial effect of Anastasia’s texts, it’s clearly evident in the reaction of the readers. I’m not talking about published reviews, which are sometimes paid for. The fact of beneficial influence is confirmed in the creative urges shown by the readers. It is evident in the multitude of poems and songs your readers have composed. I myself have bought five audiocassettes of songs dedicated to Anastasia. They have been written by people who are very simple, or maybe just the opposite — quite possibly they’re not so simple after all. I bought these cassettes and listened to them. What Anastasia said has been confirmed by life itself. After all, the poetry came about under the influence of the reading. And you call it ‘mystical’. You have no right to censor Anastasia.”

“Okay. That’s it — I’m leaving. Thanks for the advice.”

I had already taken hold of the doorknob and was about to walk out, when I heard the doctor say:

“Hold on a moment, please, Vladimir Nikolaevich. I can see you’ve taken offence at what I said. I’m sorry if I sounded a bit sharp. I don’t want us to part with bad feelings.”

Alexander Sergeevich was standing in the centre of the room. A little bit pudgy around the middle, getting along in years. He neatly buttoned up his jacket and went on:

“You should understand that you have a duty to publish everything Anastasia says. Don’t worry if not everything she says is clear to you, or to me or to someone else. Don’t worry about that. It’s important for *them* to understand.”

“And who’s *they*?”

“Young women still capable of bearing healthy children. If they get it, that means everything will change... Anyway, look at how little we’ve talked about your son, and that is the whole reason you came to see me!”

“Of course it is.”

“There’s no concrete advice I can really give you. Your situation’s too irregular. Maybe you could take some picture-books to Siberia for him. History books, for example. You might also try dressing up. Maybe this all sounds silly, but I just want to make sure you don’t paint too harsh a picture of our reality for him.”

“What picture would you like me to paint? All prettied up and glossed over?”

“That’s not what I’m talking about. Remember, you’ll be introducing yourself to your son as a representative of our reality, and this may mean you’ll be compromising yourself in his eyes.”

“And why should I alone be expected to answer for all the perversions of our society?”

“If you show your son that you are incapable of changing anything in our society for the better, you’ll simply be demonstrating how powerless you are. You’ll be compromising yourself in your son’s eyes. I have a feeling he has been raised in such a way that he will not understand how anything impossible can exist for Man.”

“I guess you’re right, Alexander Sergeevich. Thanks for the practical advice. Really, it’s *not* a bad idea to put a good face on our life as far as the child is concerned. Yes, definitely it’s worth it, or else he’ll think...”

We shook hands and, as far as I could tell, parted friends.

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