

THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER

Tribute to Mark Twain



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Chapter 1

We three boys grew up in a rural environment. Hills and thick forests surrounded the village at a greater distance. Near the village were pastures for the animals and fenced-in fields on which what people and animals needed to live grew. It was Arno, the son of the village blacksmith, who sometimes had to help out on the anvil, but had absolutely no desire to do so and would have preferred to go on adventures as a knight in shiny armor. Nico, the son of the landlord from the "Dorfkrug", dreamed of living in a larger settlement one day and running a hostel there for strangers. The third was I, Romo, the son of the village mayor. My father taught the children some reading, writing, and arithmetic in the less busy times. Every family in the village also had meadows, fields, woods and animals. We boys and our siblings mostly had to look after the animals. The summer was splendid that year and the elders of the village claimed that it was only in their childhood that they had such a summer. We boys tried to use every opportunity to make ourselves invisible from the village. We had a place on a hill, surrounded by shady old trees and bushes, including a few apple trees. That was our meeting point. Here we could smoke undisturbed and plan further adventures. We were particularly impressed by an old castle ruin that was enthroned on a steep rock.



In the village it was said that the devil lived there or at least was the hole in hell. Some older women have already seen him ride through the ruins on a fiery horse at night, they said. We had heard the horror stories of the devil, how he could plague poor people, since we were children. Others said you couldn't even approach the mountain without going insane. In the village we had such a poor man who claimed to have been at the large gate that led into the mountain below the castle and that huge insects attacked him there. Nobody took him that seriously, as he told other strange stories, all of which revolved around how he had fought the devil. Even if no one wanted

to believe this village idiot, none of the village had dared to even go to the foot of the castle rock. Even the goats were kept away from it, although there should be lush pastures there.

chapter 2

One day a boy our age strolled up to us. He spoke to us in a friendly way and immediately cast a spell over us. We were paralyzed. We are always careful with strangers, we have learned that. Usually we don't make contact and run away to the village if we meet a strange stranger out there, whether male or female. But that was a boy like us, only better dressed. He looked like a prince without a crown or sword. Nobody had to carry a weapon in our village, we all knew each other and strangers never strayed to us. There was one way to our huts, but not back out. There was something heavenly about his figure and the charisma of his person fascinated us. He spoke in an engaging voice, as if he had chatted with us several times. He was so beautiful and loving that we all really wanted to win him as a friend. Nico wanted to offer him his tobacco pipe as a gesture of friendship. But it only occurred to him that we had forgotten steel and flint when he handed the stranger his pipe. "Nico, fire is not my problem, smoking is more likely. Give me your tobacco pipes." Arno and Nico gave him his tobacco pipes, I pinched. We couldn't see exactly how he'd done it. It blew and the embers glowed stronger than we could have ourselves. Arno and Nico convinced themselves that they burned well. Nevertheless, a shiver ran down my spine. The stranger turned to me, smiled at me, and chatted away cheerfully. He kept calling us by our name. He talked about trips that sounded incredible and fantastic. We couldn't help but just listen to him. Our fear of the stranger vanished like snow in the spring sun. At first we might have thought of running away, but now we were glad that he stayed with us. And we were thrilled to have this boy as a friend.



I asked: "Where did you learn to make a fire?"
"Learned? I don't need to learn that, I can do that and a few other things." "Can you show us a few other things?"
Arno wanted to know. "Yes, maybe, if you're not afraid and don't want to run away."
"No, we won't do that!" Nico assured him. The stranger smiles at us and we kept feeling happy to have this boy as a friend. "But you have to promise me that you won't say a word to anyone

in your village about our meeting. If you talk about us, you will never see me again." At his last words, an unspeakable feeling of sadness came over us. We promised him not to tell anyone about our meeting, even if we were tortured and threatened with the stake. He smiled at us again in his winning way and said that he would help us a little to keep our promise. He also told us that we would hear strange things when we went back to the village. We shouldn't take that seriously. In the end he told us that he too is delighted to have us as friends. This triggered a wave of happiness in us that we had never experienced in our life so far. "I have another job to do and I have to go now. But we can meet again tomorrow and I'll tell you something that you

might like. " We didn't want him to leave us. We thought feverishly how we could smuggle him into the village unseen and then hide it. He smiled at us with his beaming face: "You are really nice!" Then he thought about it for a while and then said: "I'll give you a talisman. Of course, you are not allowed to show it to anyone. It is best to wear it on your body where nobody but you can see it. " He gave us what looked like a flattened egg. We had to say our name and with the repetition of our name he said: "... this is your talisman." He handed it to each of us and smiled at us in his winning way. "Oh, if you are alone at night, really alone, then you can try holding him to your ear." We stood with our mouths open and feared that we would not be able to remember all of this. The strange stranger ran back the way he had come. After a few steps he stopped, turned around again and called out to us: "It's a talisman!" We stood there speechless when he had long since disappeared into the forest.

Chapter 3

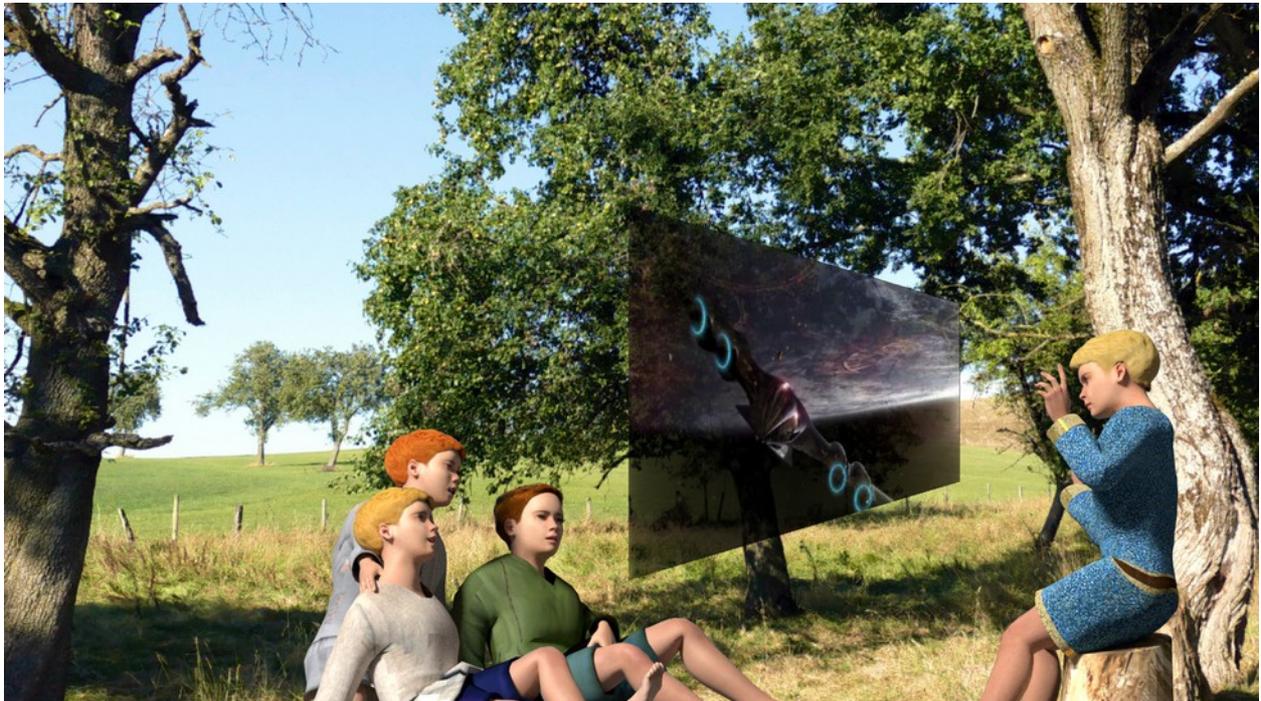
The sun was already going down when we reported relaxed from our adventure in the village. The people were very excited and almost the whole village was gathered in the village jug. While working in their fields, some farmers had clearly seen a golden disc fall from the sky. It would have been so bright that you had to hold your hand in front of your eyes. The priest was informed and believed the village was completely nuts. He would have to write a report to the high priest.

A lumberjack who said he was nearby even reported that an angel had come out of the pane. Such a real angel with wings. The priest suspected a case of heresy and resolved to investigate the matter more closely. Our hearts were full and the temptation to talk about our adventure with the strange boy was very great. But the mere attempt to tell something about it triggered a blockage in us and let us immediately become mute. After we got the usual reproach from our parents about why we came home so late and neglected our work duties, we tried to catch up on some things very quickly, like fetching water, feeding the animals and then devouring dinner. We couldn't all wait to be alone in bed. But that wasn't that easy, the siblings had to have fallen asleep first. I still remember it like it was yesterday. My heart was beating and could not calm down, my head was as hot as a fever and I was so excited that I did not think I could sleep that night. Then the time came. I pressed my talisman to my ear and laid my head on it too. At first nothing happened, but then music began to play that was so incredibly beautiful that it could only come from heaven. She abducted me into a beautiful landscape and interwoven with my dreams. The next morning I found myself well rested and refreshed. I didn't want to get up, so beautiful was the dream that I was still indulging in.

The next day the village had still not calmed down. Everyone had rushed to the village prayer room for morning prayer. The priest announced in a sharp sermon that the devil had tried the village again and that they should all purify themselves. If they didn't, the devil would inevitably have power over them. And he also announced that he would accuse all those of heresy who would spread this devil's stuff further. The cleaning could take place in offerings, money or because many hardly had any, even in kind. We boys were very busy and with particular zeal we helped all chores in order to get the afternoon off.

My father, the village mayor, had recommended to everyone, especially the children, not to leave the village. They even thought about a night watch. But in the afternoon most of them had calmed down, so that we boys could make our way to our hiding place unnoticed. On the way we exchanged ideas about the talisman. Each of us had heard wonderful music and was straight into a heavenly dream that made it very difficult to get up in the morning. Our hearts beat faster when we got to the hideout. We sensed that the mysterious stranger would appear immediately, which he did. He greeted us by name and put his hand on each one of them. We had fallen into his

charisma again and felt like giants, like heroes and dragon slayers in his company. Arno took his heart and asked: "You know our names, but we don't know where you come from or what you call yourself." He smiled at us: "I'll show you something and then I'll answer you who I am." We stretched out comfortably in the grass and waited to see what he would show us. The talisman was something that could only be explained by magic. The fear of sorcery and witchcraft was more than offset by our youthful curiosity and the enchanting way the stranger talked to us and what elation he aroused in us. He sat down on a stump opposite us and a blue light flared up, brighter than the sunshine. What we saw afterwards left us speechless.



Large iron birds flew between large spheres through the sky and towards the spheres and landed there. Some were just rocky landscapes without a green stalk for the goats, others were lush green and huge waterfalls tumbled from great heights. Animals the size of goat stalls were grazing in the lush pastures and they looked like huge fleas. For a while we couldn't say a word, then Nico asked: "Do you come from heaven there and does it look like that? "Yes" "Are you an angel?" "Yes, in your eyes I am an angel." Somehow we had already suspected that our strange friend could only be an angel who, according to rumors, had come to us in the golden disc. I wanted to know more, but before I could answer my question, he looked at me and said: "These iron birds do not belong to the angels, they travel very differently, you would only discover gigantic rocks moving under the stars . These iron birds belong to the dreams of such living beings, as you are, they also called themselves human beings and they believed they would one day become angels themselves and continue their lives in heaven as they had done on their celestial sphere. But this species from a lot of water, coal and a few minerals, which you also belong to. They are very rare and they always cannot understand who they really are, which is why they regularly destroy themselves when they have dreams like the ones I showed you. "

What we really understood back then, I no longer know exactly today. We were overwhelmed by what we saw and could hardly understand why it should look like this in heaven. "Arno, you have another question that burns on your heart and today I'll answer it too. Call me satan. And, Nico, I'm as old as you are, at least as far as my physical shape is concerned. " At the word Satan

we all three involuntarily winced. Satan had always been a companion of the devil, an evil angel. "That is not entirely true," Satan responded to our fears, it is only advantageous for your priests to divide heaven into good and bad angels. With this it is easy to rule among you. There is no good or bad in heaven, it is just an invention of your kind. For you I am an angel who was banished to earth. " He smiled at us and chatted on in his open and engaging language. "Angels are not interested in such beings made of water and coal. You are only something to angels as ants are to you. "

We sat with our mouths open and couldn't say a word, so Satan fascinated us. "It's different for me. I showed you pictures of an extinct water-carbon species. As a small child, I was abandoned and grew up with children like you, like you. My name was Nanina then. But I didn't grow up like that. Later I found my comrades who were my age and we were youthful angels for a time that far exceeded your imagination. " Satan paused and we continued to look at his lips as if hypnotized. Then he probably said a little more to himself. "Your species will suffer a different fate than the species 5 billion years ago. You don't have any of the carbon deposits and will you ever get this far to harness the energy of the stars I think I have something else to do today and will go now. " We looked sad and in our minds we almost begged that Satan would come again tomorrow.

He had heard our mental pleading and said with a winning smile: "Well, then we'll meet tomorrow at the Teufelsloch for a swim. I wish you had fruits that we can eat there after bathing. " The devil's hole, we mentioned it in our minds. No children bathed there, and adults were never seen in the area. The children bathed in the village pond, a shallow and muddy pool. The devil's hole was a dangerous place with deep water and anyone who got lost there could meet a ghost who rose from the graves presumed there or from the water. We older boys had already dared to see this eerie place from a nearby hill around noon and then quickly disappeared again. "You don't need to be afraid," Satan reassured us, "we'll meet in the afternoon when the sun is still high.

That night we had another wonderful experience. I put one ear on my talisman, heard the wonderful music and thought for myself whether the others could hear the same music as well. Involuntarily I said "Arno" and the music got quieter, then I heard Arno's voice, who said: "Romo, did you call me?" Spontaneously I said: "No, but I must have said your name." We were speechless for a while before we realized we could talk to each other through the talisman. We made an appointment and each went out of the house so that no one else could hear us. We also included Nico. So the three of us talked and were so excited and also a little afraid about the talisman. We didn't remember how long we had talked so excitedly. But that morning I slept a long time until my father threw me out of bed with the words: "You lazy dog, get up and do your work!".

After lunch, we disappeared from our families and met in our hiding place. Now we were able to communicate via the talisman during the day, which we used extensively. And something else we found out: if other people were around and could have heard, then the talisman remained silent. Together we approached the devil's hole. We saw Satan from a distance, swimming and diving elegantly in the water. We were no longer afraid when we saw him, so we undressed and slid down the sandy slope. The water was warm on the surface, but it was getting colder further down. We swam and dived in competition with Satan, but we were always left behind, he was far better than us.

Exhausted, we worked our way up the slope again. Once at the top, a big bat or whatever it

was flew to us and brought us a small table with delicious fruits, some of which we had never seen before. We were overwhelmed by the taste and the fruity sweetness. But that was not all. On the little golden table there were still four goblets of a completely unknown kind. They sparkled and glittered in the sunshine. The wine we drank from it was nothing like anything we had ever drunk or anything else we would drink in our lives. He put us in an ecstasy, as if we were floating back and forth in heaven like Satan between the different planets. We felt so happy and in love with Satan that we would have done anything for him just to be with him in these heavenly worlds all the time.



Chapter 4

We did not see Satan for the next few days, although we regularly, when we knew we were unobserved, talked to one another about him through our talisman. We found our daily chores, such as fetching water and working in the fields, stupid and boring. We longed for him so much that we showed no interest in the other children. What they were doing seemed silly and childish to us. We would have loved to hear more from him and we were eager to hear about these magical, distant worlds in heaven.

There was some excitement in the village. The priest had informed the high priest in the market town and had come to the decision that the heresy should be combated in our village. It could only have been the devil who bewitched the village. Too many people had noticed a golden disc in the sky and a woodcutter had even seen an angel get out. Our village was in a state of excitement and we longingly expected that the angel would show himself in the village and perform miracles. Our priest was at a loss, people no longer listened to him and his weekly prayers, which only revolved around the devil and his machinations in this village. We learned that the woodcutter, his name was Teno, had confessed in the embarrassing questioning that he was possessed by the devil and that he had commissioned him to spread the rumor about the angel.

The trial was due in three days and we were already full of expectations of how he would be executed. His wife could be heard howling in her hut and her two girls no longer dared go into the village. Heretics and witches were usually tied on a pile of wood and then burned. Other punishments were stoning, mostly for women who had been unfaithful, and staking was a feature in wars and many other gruesome forms of death. We had all heard these punishments in the weekly sermons that we older children also had to attend regularly. We made an appointment through our talisman and went to our hiding place where we first met Satan. But he still did not appear. Then the time had come when all three of us were talking secretly about our talisman again, we suddenly heard his voice: "Come to the Devil's Gorge this afternoon, two hours before sunset, I'll be there too."



Our hearts beat faster, we could finally meet him again. What would he show us this time, what interesting things would tell us. Could his bat bring us delicious fruit? We were in such an ecstasy that it never occurred to us that we were actually heretics too. But that didn't interest us and instinctively we did the right thing, whereby of course Satan helped us somehow: We didn't tell anyone about our secret! What initially irritated us a bit was the meeting point in the Devil's Gorge. This was an ancient path, but it was not yet overgrown, although no one walked or driven on it and it led in several turns directly to the old castle ruin, which was said to be the gateway to hell. The opportunity to meet Satan there made us forget everything. When we arrived running and out of breath, Satan was waiting for us. He was very elegantly dressed and accompanied by two knights in their armor.

"I'll show up in the village tomorrow and watch the heretic trial. So that you are not amazed at my appearance, I am meeting you today. " Satan paused and smiled at us one by one. "Yes, I am a prince tomorrow and my name is Nanino, Prince of Arcasia. And yes, you saw me for the first

time in the village. I am passing through to my castle in your country. Now you are disappointed that I am not telling you stories and adventures from the vastness of heaven again. " We actually looked a bit disappointed, but the prospect of seeing him again tomorrow made up for us on the spot. Satan turned around and wanted to take the path to the castle ruins. "I can still show you something that you've wanted to know for a long time. You wonder if I can make myself invisible. Well, I can avoid being seen, but becoming completely invisible, no angel can do that either. Ghost stories may be of interest to you, but anyone who claims to have seen a ghost is definitely a liar. See for yourself! "Satan disappeared before our eyes, as did his knights.

Chapter 5

We could hardly sleep that night. We hadn't seen many witch burnings and stoning. Very early in the morning we met at the meeting room in the village. Not many villagers were allowed to trial. The verdict was already certain, since Teno had confessed in the embarrassing questioning that he was in league with the devil. Only when the fire was burned at the stake were all the people, including us children, present. We knew that people threw stones at the heretic and that he was mostly dead before the fire really burned. He was only burned so that his soul did not end up in heavenly paradise, but went straight to hell. The trial had already started when Satan and his knights on horseback showed up. This upset the villagers and everyone flocked to the meeting room. The knights stood next to the door and their martial sight kept people at a distance. We tried to look through the door and they made an exception for us, they let the three of us right up to the door. Obviously Satan had instructed the knights to do so. The high priest, jury, and executioner were amazed. "Lord, who are you, you are not allowed in here! Immediately leave the verdict. " Satan answered and he knew that his guard outside the door demanded the necessary respect: "I am Prince Nanino of Arcasia and I am passing through. Then I heard that a verdict was about to be pronounced and that the delinquent has no legal counsel. " "The accused confessed that legal counsel is not required." Satan grinned at the high priest: "What did he confess?" "He claimed that a gold disc fell from heaven and that an angel came out of it. After an embarrassing questioning, he then confessed that the devil had commissioned him to spread the word in the village. "



Atan replied with his irresistible charm and his youthful voice: "So he told the truth, because I also saw this disc and many others," he looked around at those present, who had also said so days ago, but now denied everything, "wasn't it perhaps the devil himself or his helpers who made the woodcutter deny the truth?" The priest of the village, a priest from the market town, the high priest and the two torturers were frightened. After a short pause, the high priest composed himself: "What are you presuming. Did the devil himself send you to commit this blasphemy? We will also prosecute you if you do not withdraw your statement immediately! " Satan laughed. "I am a little surprised what is going on here, when most of you will be dead in three days. There may be a few girls and women left who will be enslaved and dragged away. The village will no longer exist, it will be burned down. " A murmur went through the room. "It is monstrous what you are spreading."

"It's just the truth. Let's leave that and let's finish the judgment now. " Satan had put everyone in the room into a kind of speechlessness and he continued calmly: "In my country we have learned to expose and recognize the servants of the devil. I'll show you who the devil's helpers are who made the lumberjack deny the truth. Look at them, the torturers, aren't they the devil's helpers? " We could only look through the door, but we saw very clearly that the torturers suddenly looked hideous and looked very much like the devil as he had been described to us. A horror arose in the room and everyone tried to panic to leave the room. Satan's knights now stood in the doorway and did not let anyone out.

Satan spoke in a voice that no one could immediately forget: "I proclaim the verdict as the aristocrat with the jurisdiction conferred on me: the accused is free and the accusers are sentenced to a reparation of 100 pieces of silver." The knights released the door and the people streamed out. The torturers were no longer seen. The priests hurried to get to the market town in order to send a pack of bailiffs to the village from there. We were standing in front of the meeting room with Satan and could not process what we saw. He looked at us and smiled: "I'm your friend and I'll be waiting for you tomorrow in the old castle ruins, if I'm your friend too. You will climb the mountain effortlessly, I will mark the safe way. " We stood there undecided,

should we go to the castle ruins, from which there is a direct route to hell? Satan replied to our thoughts, “Yes, we will meet there and you will see that it is a very interesting place. You don't need to be afraid. What is being said about the mountain is just ... well, I'll show you.” Then he rode off with his knights and we suspected where he was going.

When we got home, we were immediately asked what else we had spoken to this strange prince. Our parents were so desperate that they didn't know what to believe now. Some had seen this golden, glittering disk fall from the sky, but when the priest branded it as blasphemy, no one wanted to have seen it again. Since we remained steadfastly silent, the three of us were placed under house arrest for the next few days.

Chapter 6

We used every opportunity to exchange ideas about the talisman. We had almost forgotten it again, but Nico brought the memory back: Satan had said casually that the village will soon no longer exist. That worried us and we thought feverishly how we could escape our house arrest. We wanted to know more about what Satan was talking about. Using the talisman, we agreed to venture out one hour after midnight. But then we fell asleep very soundly, as always, and would have slept through it if our talisman didn't let out a quiet voice that woke us up immediately. We quickly got dressed and managed to escape from the parental home. We had arranged to meet where Satan first appeared to us with his knights, in the Devil's Gorge. It was pitch dark, no moonlight and lots of clouds, so that only a few stars could be seen now and then. We held hands and could hardly walk for fear. We couldn't see the way, only in a bright lane above our heads we could see something of the sky. There were no trees and there had to be the path. The rest of the night we walked the many turns of the Devil's Gorge and in the dawn the path through the forest came to an end and we saw the castle hill in front of us. There was indeed something diabolical about him and a shiver ran down our spines.



The way went on and then with the rising of the sun we stood in front of the castle hill. We were no longer afraid and we felt that Satan was not far from us. We reached the rock in the late morning. Satan stood on a wall and gave us signs of where to climb the mountain. He waved to us and we heard his voice in our talisman. He gave us precise instructions as to which way we could climb and also made us aware of possible dangers

Chapter 7

Satan greeted us and, as almost always, amazed us. "You are the first people in the castle. Do you like it?" Arno said what we were all thinking at the moment: "Who built it? "I built it and as you know, it is my sin to have come to you humans." Satan smiled and I don't remember ever seeing him laugh, then he added: "That's why she sees from afar just look like a ruined castle. I built it as a ruin and it is sufficient for my purposes. " The castle ruins had two towers that looked as if they were still whole. Everything else seemed to be broken. "Yes, the towers are usable and you will enter them today," he answered our thoughts. He showed us around for a moment, then we sat on a stone bench by a window that was still in good condition.



"Didn't you wonder why I let you come up here?" Somehow we already had, but the opportunity to be with Satan again had put us in such a happy mood that everything else seemed insignificant. What would he show us about strange worlds? What kind of rare fruit would we get? What feats were we able to marvel at? But now I wanted to know and asked Satan directly: "Are you omniscient and omnipotent like a god?" Satan just smiled.

"Well, for you I am an angel and I have a thousand times more eyes and ears than you and I know more than you can imagine. To be omniscient, I would have to have a thousand times a thousand more eyes and ears to have a fraction of omniscience. Also, I can do a thousand times more things than you, but I am not omnipotent. I am not a god, I belong to the aristocracy of immortals, that may be like a god for you. If you can't understand it either. " Satan looked at Nico: "You would like to know if I know the future. Well, I know many possibilities for the

future, some will be certain, others maybe and some only very rarely.

This ruined castle has served me here on your planet for more than a thousand years. At that time I watched you humans and chose the three of you to be my friends. " At that time we didn't wonder why we were chosen. Only later did we understand what he meant when he said: "I chose you because I like you, you are at an age that makes you curious about the world and you have not yet succumbed to the drive to preserve species. You are also more intelligent than your peers, which is not very common. Satan smiled at Nico: "I haven't always been to this ruined castle, but I always knew what was happening on your planet."

And turning to me: "The superstition in this area has a real reason, what my helpers do has its origin in this mountain, which I will not show you. If I should ever leave it and give it up, your descendants will wonder what this building was used for and they will ascribe it to the devil, a god or a higher being from the universe. Because what they will find are only small corridors and buried cavities. Today the mountain is still alive. " We could only be amazed and sometimes doubt our minds, but Satan always left us in an ecstasy and euphoric mood, so that we were more ready to believe in a fantastic dream that we were just living through.

Arno had become impatient: "Satan, can you show us more pictures of the people who believed they could become angels and fly through the sky in big iron birds?" This time Satan didn't smile, "No, because those were just dreams that can never come true. It was only intended to warn you that such beings as they were could not live very long on their planet. In all beings made of water and carbon, I simply call them all people I have already seen, the same rules apply when they develop from the animal kingdom into a society. They are afraid of nature, of hunger, of strangers, of predators, even of the neighbors, and that's why they always try to get safety, through fire, through houses, through weapons.

They are greedy and try to have more and to be better than their neighbors, even if for this they have to rob and enslave their fellow men. They believe that this will give them security. This is how kingdoms, dictatorships and so-called rule of the people emerge. And what sets people apart from animals is their laziness. They are too lazy to gather food all day, they are too lazy to laboriously hunt animals, so they keep animals in flocks and till fields with plant food. They want to transport large quantities of food, wood and stones more easily, so they invent the cart with wheels. You are too lazy to carry everything yourself with your hands. Greed, fear and laziness are mutually dependent and I do not know of any people in other parts of heaven who have otherwise managed to form a society that does not call itself the top of the water-carbon development. Satan looked at us and knew that we still couldn't do anything with water and carbon. He laughed and said, "Look at you! When you get injured, red colored water flows out of you and when you see the human remains at the stake, they are black as the coal the blacksmith buys from the charcoal burner. These are the most important of your components.

You are special, you humans here on this planet will not be able to dispose of great energies that consist of carbon and hydrogen. You will not be able to build such great iron birds. You can take another path of your development and that is interesting for me, that is why I committed this fall and came to you on this planet. Pandae didn't like it that much, angels don't deal with people. " "Who is Pandae?" I wanted to know, is it the name of the god of whom you are an angel? " "Pandae a god, yes, you could say that. I am I, Satan, but also a part of Pandae. " Satan, I believed, had gone to himself and was silent for a moment, but then his face lit up in the usual way: "You will be hungry and in the tower there next to the entrance portal and the ruined portico I have a snack for you. " We followed Satan and even before he was at the door, it opened as if by itself. Radiant light flooded outside. We held our hands in front of our eyes, so it blinded us at first.



"You get used to it quickly," Satan explained. Inside the tower stood a bench and in front of it an oval table. We had never seen a table like this before. Satan asked us to take a seat and went to a shaft. He looked inside and soon afterwards a wooden board floated up with ham, cheese, fruit and bread. And what particularly pleased us: There was a goblet with this wonderful red drink. Satan handed out such a board to each of us and we wanted to start eating right away, but Satan called to us: "Wait, first let's drink to our friendship." We raised the goblets and drank to Satan. "So now you can satisfy your hunger." We felt overjoyed, as if we were already in paradise with Satan. Everything tasted delicious, although Satan assured us that it only looked like cheese or ham and that he only did it so that we wouldn't have to eat anything unusual that we would naturally dislike. The most delicious of all was the drink that brought us into the longed-for euphoria. Only now did I notice something like a staircase that went up in a circle and was made of very thin iron rods.



"It goes one floor up, there is a room in which tomorrow I can show you a few pictures from distant worlds again" Satan answered my question, "but now I will show you the room where you will sleep this night. " In the meantime it was starting to get dark. Satan led us to the other tower. It was very bright there, too, and I figured that even with a hundred candles it wouldn't be so bright. He explained to us how this little rain shower worked, which he called the shower and the toilet or whatever he called it, on which we had to sit until we were cleaned there too. He also had a brush for brushing our teeth, which we only had to hold in our mouths against the teeth so that it would clean the teeth all by itself. A staircase led from this room to the upper floor, where there were three beds and three chairs. "This is your bedroom. After the evening cleaning you go to these beds and when you are ready to sleep, I will come again to wish you good night. Take off your clothes, I'll take them with me and tomorrow they'll be fresh and clean again. "

Satan disappeared with our clothes on and we looked around in amusement. Still in this wonderfully euphoric mood, Arno was the first to take a shower. "The water is warm and smells good!" He exclaimed. We followed him and began a whole new cleansing ritual, then we lay blissfully in our beds. The light became very slowly darker, took on a slightly bluish tinge and Satan appeared. He wished us good night, showed us pictures on the ceiling of the room and played heavenly music. We didn't notice how it disappeared again. The pictures were amazing and I was blown away. Now, after many years of meeting Satan, it seems to me that Satan knew some of our fantasies and showed them in overwhelming images. At some point we fell asleep and at some point we woke up again. Or were we woken up by the music and the play of colors in our bedroom? Nico said: "Do we have to stand under the little rain again, wash thoroughly and clean our teeth?"

"I think Satan said something like that," replied Arno. I nodded in agreement. If anything, we went swimming in summer and washed our feet in the village pond in the evenings. In winter there was a wooden tub with warm water once a week, so our mother washed us. Our things were in the washroom, were clean and smelled of flowers. We went outside and ran to the kitchen tower. Satan was waiting for us there and everyone got a hearty breakfast, a soup and a

fried egg with wonderfully yellow bread. Satan didn't have the potion for us today, but it wasn't necessary either, we were still in this euphoric happy mood. If I remember that today as an old man, we didn't even think about our parents back then, who might wonder where we had stayed away. It happened that we were not at home overnight, but in these cases the parents knew where we were sleeping.

Chapter 8

Satan led us out into the courtyard to show us one more of his miracles. Surely he had picked up our thoughts and noticed our greed for them, which made us forget everything else. One question persisted: "If you are an angel of the god Pandae, then who is our god to whom we pray? The priests announce his words that he said. " Satan became thoughtful, or so it seemed to me. Then Satan spoke without looking at us directly: "In all these human societies that I have already seen in the most distant worlds, there is faith in one God who is omniscient and omnipotent. And in every belief there are angels or other subordinate gods as the assistants of that one god. This is understandable, since people always need explanations for things and events that they cannot understand. " I contradicted him: "We can always understand you better, even if it was difficult for us at the beginning."

Satan smiled at us again in his winning way: "You are like the spirit you understand, not me. It is I who try to bring to your mind what you can understand. " Nico asked further: "Are there always angels who have been banished to people and who seduce and incite people to evil?" "In every faith there are fallen gods or angels who have taught man what is good and what is bad for them. And in every belief the fear of unbelief, of evil, is used as a means of domination. The evil gods and angels stole fire from the good gods and brought it to people. They destroyed Paradise by teaching people the ability to gain knowledge. Paradise is just that place in time that describes people as animals who know neither good nor bad and also feel no urge to look for explanations for what surrounds them. " Satan leaned against an old pillar and directed us to sit on a piece of debris. He smiled happily at us, we had to laugh. Satan looked up at the sky and held his arm outstretched. A large insect landed on the palm of his hand.



"I've already seen that, it's dangerous," shouted Arno. "It's usually not dangerous, but when it is pursued, it cries its brothers and then many of these insects pounce on the pursuers and can sting them and this sting can also be fatal. I built it and they all serve as my eyes and ears on your planet. " We could only be amazed because Satan told us that he also has other eyes and ears that

look like animals to our eyes. The insect took off again in our direction. Arno and Nico ducked quickly and I let myself fall over backwards. We were still a little afraid. But Satan continued to tell about the many planets he had seen and first led us into the kitchen for a small meal and then into the room above the kitchen, which was actually a dining room. Satan tried again to explain to us that the fruit, meat, and bread only look like that, but that they were actually something completely different. From our incredulous faces he probably recognized that we couldn't understand that and then only said: "I hope you taste better than what you have eaten and drunk

so far." Of course it was and we told Satan that too.

There were comfortable cushions over the kitchen and on one wall we could see pictures of fantastic landscapes on other planets, which we flew over like a bird. He showed us animals that looked very strange and very dangerous. In huge forests there were insects the size of humans. Satan explained to us that there was a lot of the carbon and some of the water in the air and said that we would live in a fairly lean world and that this would be a good way to create a different society than him would know. I can still remember what I am writing down here and only really understood it much later. Nico remembered what Satan had said at the heretic trial: "Satan, you said our village was going to be burned down. Did you mean to intimidate the priests into making a different judgment? "

"No, that was just a look into the future, as I know there will be war and it will reach your village pretty quickly. I know the plan of the prince who is preparing the war. A difficult time begins for you now. The history books will say that it was the time of the quarreling principalities. Come with me, I'll show you! " Satan led us to the collapsed castle wall and we looked with horror in the direction of our village. A great cloud of smoke was over the area. We looked at Satan in horror. I asked him: "Can't you prevent that, please!" "Angels do not interfere in human realms. To commit a greater sin, I cannot do that. With you, my friends, I've gone a little too far. I also explained to you why I did that. "

Arno couldn't believe it: "Our siblings, our parents, are being murdered." "Your parents and brothers do. If you hadn't come to the castle because you were too scared, you would surely be dead by now. " We looked at each other and Nico started crying. "You don't need to cry, if a natural disaster had wiped out your village, the result would be the same." Wars, natural disasters and epidemics always bring great suffering to the people affected. But if the people who follow are better off and are less likely to die a violent death, then there has been a development. After the wars of the princes there will be a great king who will establish a new order for a longer period of time, with better laws and more security for the people. But you won't experience that anymore. "

Nico stopped crying: "At least you are going to paradise now. How is it there, Satan? Can you tell us something about paradise and show us? " "No, I can not do that. When the time comes when you are going to die, imagine something where you could live forever. This is your paradise then. I am immortal, my memory core, what I am, what I am, remains with me. Your memory core arises with your birth and even if it still grows, you make your experiences of your life, it starts early to lose parts. If you should get very old, you will find that your memory core, which is stored in your brain, becomes smaller and smaller and disappears with death.

My memory core keeps getting bigger, I don't forget anything. What I've learned once is never lost. Even if I were standing in front of you and suddenly grinded between large stones, I would only lose the last memory and could go on living with the memory before the accident. " Satan looked at us again with his winning smile: "However, you would then have to wait a little while until I would have come down from heaven again." We went into the tower depressed, but over the food and the heavenly drink we forgot everything, feeling as cheerful and euphoric as before. In the meantime it was dark and Satan led us into the courtyard. "A horde of warriors is approaching the castle hill. I'll have to scare them off. "



He went to the well, but it wasn't, as we had already found out. We should stay back and not be frightened. That is not dangerous, but it will make the warriors run away in panic. He stood at the fountain and a red beam of fire shot into the sky and illuminated everything around, a shining blue ball rose and was pierced by a subsequent red beam of fire. It was scary, but also incredibly beautiful.

“Those who saw this will never come near this ruin,” Satan assured us, “tomorrow I'll show you something very special, but first you go clean and then go to sleep. You know the ritual and you can now. ” After the warm shower of cleansing, we went to bed, listened to fantastic music and beautiful pictures. Satan appeared, wished us good night and we fell asleep blissfully.

Chapter 9

After breakfast, Satan went back to the courtyard with us. We were very excited to see what we would see today. We lined up in a circle. A blue lightning bolt that we already knew flashed up and then we saw a castle that we couldn't touch, that floated before our eyes. It was very beautiful, with fortified walls, towers, a hall. Arno even discovered a forge. I liked the great keep. “There's a library in there that I've put together for you. In the first years since you are still boys, my knights and helpers will take care of your safety. We were amazed and couldn't understand what Satan was saying to us. Today I still sometimes wonder why we didn't go crazy and crazy back then. We only owed that to our carefree youth.

“You will live there as my friends. I cannot accompany you and show you the function and the secrets of the castle. Pandae calls me back, there is a war of the gods. ” I can't remember exactly what Satan said, at least it sounded like that. “But I will still show you a secret that the first few years will help you when it comes to life and death for you. Comes with.” We went to the old ruined hypostyle hall and Satan opened access to an underground vault.



"In your castle you will also find such a crypt that is only accessible to you. Strangers are so deterred, should they intrude, that they never attempt to intrude again. Death can also be a deterrent for successors. Arno, do you have the courage to go down there? " Arno hesitated a little, but he was actually the bravest of us. A little hesitantly he went down the steps. Apart from a faint glow of light, we couldn't see anything from the outside. He wasn't down in the tomb long.

"There was nothing to see but a ball that glowed blue." "Yes, Arno, this is an intelligence that manages all of this when I'm not here. At certain intervals she informs me about what is happening on this planet. She will also help you in the new castle. Only the three of you will be able to question them directly in the crypt there. Every stranger is not allowed in. You too will not penetrate further than the crypt into the bottom of the castle, because down there is the kingdom of Satan, is my kingdom. " Satan smiled and looked at us one by one: "A little superstition in the kingdom of evil can be quite helpful, just be careful not to suspect you have made a contract with the devil. In the beginning you too will only be able to rule your kingdom by spreading fear. Humans are herd animals and not predators. " In the afternoon Satan tried to explain to us what options we had in the new castle. He also said that it is located on a peninsula and that high mountains provide natural protection for enemies that are sure to be there. We should manage the land well. What we must not forget is the education that has been prepared for us and kept in the keep. Education is our first job in the castle. If we could do that, we could stand, otherwise we would perish.

He suggested to us that Arno should stand up for the defense of the castle and the country. Nico would be very suitable for business and I should take care of education and workshops. The lord of the castle could be changed every year. Satan spoke to each and every one of us. He told me that I should promote the education of young people and make sure that the criteria for starting a family are designed in such a way that the distance from the animal kingdom increases steadily. I would find more details on this in the library. Then he finally smiles at me and said: Make sure that this planet doesn't end in an idiocracy. " Today I know what he meant by that,

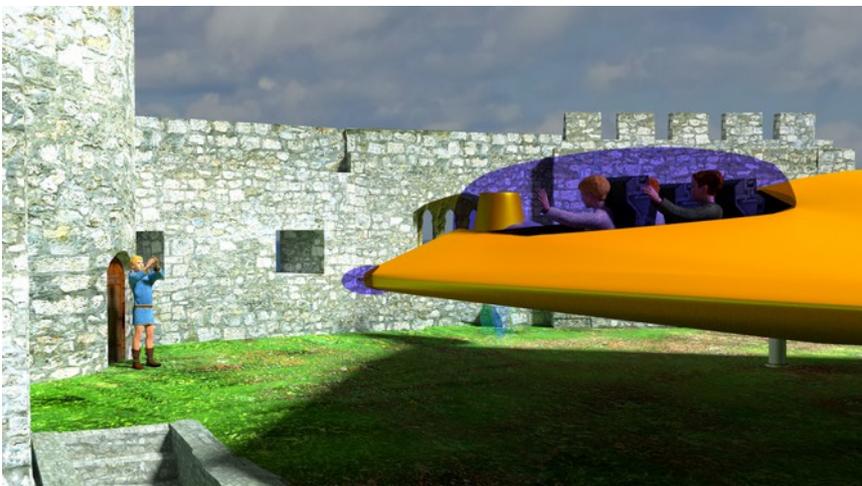
then I didn't know what to do with the term.

Chapter 10

On the morning of the following day, Satan said goodbye to us. We fell into a blissful frenzy when he hugged us and kissed our foreheads. I still remember this feeling, even though I'm old now and the last of the three of us. "You're coming back soon!" Pleaded Nico and tears ran down his face. Satan smiled at us one last time: "Eternity has no hands." A large yellow steel bird arrived. We had seen something like this in his reports on other worlds.



"I quickly rebuilt it for you guys because it wasn't made for humans. It will fly slowly so that you can see something of your planet." We got in and, like in a dream, we flew to our new home. Even today I dream of this trip at night. We felt like angels to ourselves. All the encounters with Satan and the subsequent life in the castle were an incentive for us to found a better society.



Today I can say that with many setbacks and dangers that we had to endure, we have managed to improve life a little, to make it more civilized, as Satan would say. We have always hoped that Satan would return. When I die too, the next generation will

know our encounters with Satan. I hope they will wait for Satan's return just as we did, for a lifetime.

This text is the epilogue from the 3rd volume of the transhumanist novel "Pandae"
by Michael Nitsche

Also visit the website: www.nanina-roman.de

