

Professor Mettā's Promises



A short story for young people

With gratitude to the people of
Myanmar and especially to our
teachers:

Venerable Ledi Sayadaw
Saya Thetgyi
Sayagyi U Ba Khin
SN Goenka (Goenkaji) & Mataji

Vipassana Trust
Pencoyd St Owens Cross Herefordshire HR2 8NG

February 2021

Professor Mettā's Promises



Story by Tom Wolfe

Illustrations by Heidi Green

Number two Pleasant Villas, the tiny house where Professor Mettā lives, is a miniature oasis of calm on the outskirts of the hustle and bustle of a huge noisy and hectic city. He has lived there for many years, and every morning like clockwork since before anyone can remember, after getting up, washing his face and brushing his teeth he sits in complete silence with his eyes closed, observing his incoming and outgoing breath for some time. And, after sitting like that for a

while, every morning like clockwork, also since before anyone can remember, he spends a few moments sitting in silence sending his good wishes to all the beings of the world. To all the beings of the world that is. He then steps out into his little garden and greets the day.





“Good morning, Captain” said the Professor to his neighbour one particular morning. The air was fresh with the smell of rain that had fallen softly overnight, and the leaves of the trees were dancing happily in the morning springtime breeze. “Is it?” gruffed the Captain rather abruptly from across the garden hedge. “I mean is it really a good morning?” he continued. “Oh” thought the Professor quietly to himself.



“Just look at my lovely cabbages! Ruined! And my succulent lettuces! Destroyed!” raged the Captain. “Myyy garden! What am iiii going to do?” he roared, as his face started to turn a brighter shade of purple.

Professor Mettā wasn't sure whether he could see smoke starting to billow out from his neighbour's ears or not. "Just you wait till I get my hands on you, you pesky birds and snails!" he muttered. "Oh," continued the Professor in his thoughts, "the poor Captain doesn't seem

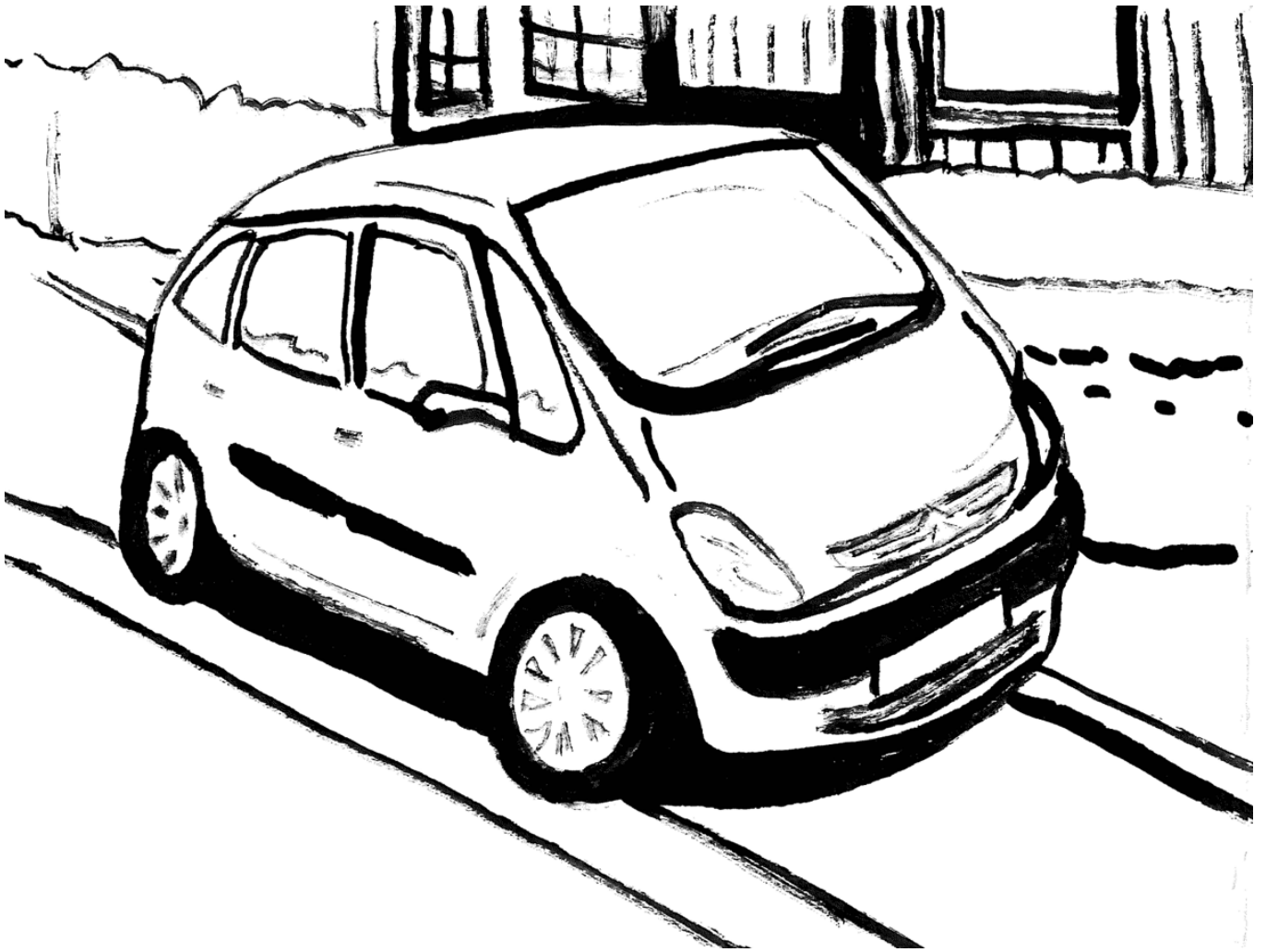


to understand that the birds and the snails think the cabbages and lettuces are for them." He then heard a very loud and quite horrible "Aarrrrgggggh!!" coming from over the hedge. "It's not their fault, they are animals after all," he thought, at which point he decided it would be best if he sent some good wishes, not only to his friend the Captain, but also to the birds and snails in the garden that had had a midnight feast on the Captain's vegetables.

“Come my dear Captain,” said the Professor to his distraught friend in the kindest and gentlest of manners, “don’t get yourself upset about your garden. You can plant some more cabbages and lettuces later! But now, since it is such a beautiful morning, if you were to let me take you out for a drive into the countryside I’d be delighted. Let us go boating on the lake!” The Professor thought that the tranquillity of the lake might help his old friend calm down a little, and, having been

neighbours for so long he knew very well that the Captain wouldn’t be able to resist a trip there. And of course he was right, or rather, he was at least partly right.

It was slightly later on that morning when the two companions were trundling along in Professor Mettā’s car on their way to the great lake that the Captain announced his great idea. “We could hire some fishing rods as well as a boat, and have ourselves a morning of fishing too!” he exclaimed.



“What djya think about that eh, Mr. Prof?” he added, somewhat proudly. The Professor was silent for a moment whilst he thought the proposal through. Now, Professor Mettā being Professor Mettā, was so full of good wishes

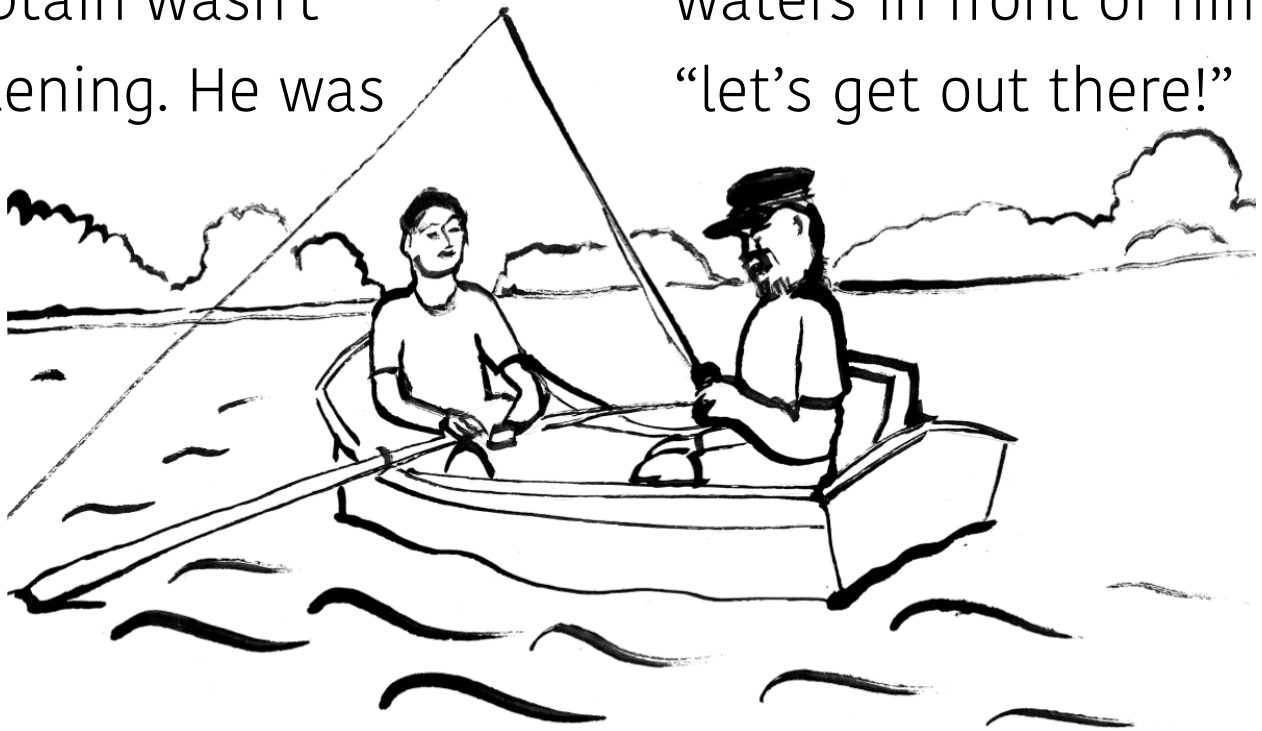
that he certainly wanted the Captain to be happy and for him to enjoy his day out, but his good will for his friend was equal to his good will for all the fish and all the other animals who called the lake their home.

So naturally he wanted them to be happy too, which to him meant at the very least not getting caught up on some fisherman's baited hook. Weighing up the situation from behind the wheel of his car with the open road ahead and the beautiful countryside all around, Professor Mettā became aware of the gentle touch of his breath as it came in and went out through his nostrils, and with this he felt a sense of calmness, confidence and certainty fill him up. "Let us see about that

when we get to the lake shall we?" he said very softly but very firmly to his friend. And it was not so long after that the Professor's car came to a quiet halt in the car park next to the shore of the great lake, and the two friends hopped out. "One rowing boat for two, please" said the Professor to the clerk in the hut by the shore where the boats were rented out. "Oh yes, and two fishing rods as well, please" added his fellow traveller hastily. "You had better make that one rod only," added the Professor

without hesitation, “you’re the fisherman so you fish but it’s really not my scene,” he said turning to his neighbour. “But if you’d allow me to do the rowing it would be my pleasure.” However, the Captain wasn’t listening. He was

already rushing off rod in hand to the little wooden jetty so he could launch the boat that they had hired. “C’mon Mr. Prof,” he yelled, pointing excitedly out to the crystal clear turquoise waters in front of him “let’s get out there!”



And so it was that the two friends found themselves gracefully gliding out towards the middle of the lake, the

Professor rowing effortlessly, the oars cutting into the water like a warm knife through soft butter.

The whole time the Captain fiddled tirelessly with his fishing tackle, tying intricate flies with dazzlingly coloured silks in feverish anticipation of his morning's fishing. After quite some time the oarsman finally dropped anchor and the Captain, in a flash, had his fishing line cast out into the silky depths, impatient for the first bite. "It won't be long now Mr. Prof, just you wait and see!" he exclaimed deliriously, as he set himself to the task of waiting. And there, in

the middle of the blue watery mass, with his fishing rod in his hand and his friend the Professor next to him, he waited. And he waited. And he waited some more. And then he waited a little bit more, every now and again re-baiting his hook and recasting his line. But he waited all morning, and a short stretch into the early afternoon too, and there was nothing, not even the faintest splash or ripple suggesting the slightest interest in his bait from the silvery friends below.



All the while he became increasingly impatient, and the more impatient he got, the more agitated he became, and the more agitated he got, the more impatient he became, until the little boat itself trembled all the way from stern to prow with the Captain's agitation. "Good grief! And botheration, and

fiddlesticks too!" he muttered to himself over and over, and over again. "Have all the fish gone on a fishy holiday to the great wide ocean or what?" he gasped and tutted in disbelief. Thus were spent several hours of the fisherman's day, oscillating between the heights of giddy hope and the depths of darkest frustration.

But what, you may ask, was Professor Mettā up to in the midst of this little scene? He remained calm in the midst of the storm you could say. Not that it was a stormy day out on the lake. Not at all! There wasn't a single cloud in the sky!

Rather, he was calm in the midst of the storm that whistled through his shipmate. In the little craft sat the Professor joyfully, bobbing up and down amidst the flotsam and jetsam, silently enjoying the beauty of the scenery around him, all the while

sending his good wishes to all the beings of the world. To all the beings of the world that is. And amongst all those beings he made a very special little mention to all the fish in all of the world's lakes, and to all the fishermen of the world trying to catch them.

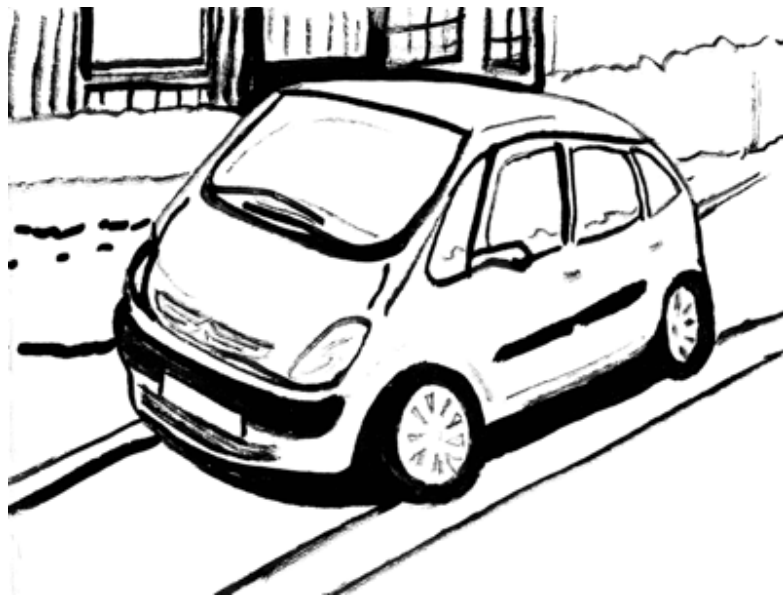


“Good grief, and botheration, and fiddlesticks too!” blurted once more from the Captain’s lips. This was followed swiftly by a crescendo of “Right that’s it! Enough already! Let's get out of here! There cannot possibly be a single solitary fish in this watery wasteland because if there were I would sure as well have caught every last one of them!” his face slowly turning a brighter shade of purple. Until finally, as impatiently as he had sped off from the shore rod in hand, he raised

the anchor and snatched the oars from the Professor and huffing and puffing he rushed the little boat all the way back to the water’s edge. And Professor Mettā, sitting in the back of the boat, wasn’t sure whether he could see smoke starting to billow out from his neighbour’s ears or not. “Oh” thought the Professor quietly to himself, surveying the situation as they landed somewhat clumsily back at the shore. “Come my dear friend, it has been a long morning so let us go

and get ourselves some refreshments!” he said, as his friend dashed dizzily from the little wooden jetty to the car park where the

Professor’s car was waiting for them. It is perhaps needless to say that the Captain wasn't listening.



The sun was now high in the azure sky and its reflection danced endlessly this way and that in the gentle wavelets of the lake as the two friends pulled slowly away in the Professor’s faithful old car. All around them

the forests, meadows and hills were bursting with the bright green juiciness of early springtime. From behind the wheel of his car the Professor knowingly decided on a beautiful and scenic onwards route,

and after passing through a few bends in the road up and out of the valley which here and there gave onto breathtaking views of the lake, it wasn't long before he came across what it was he was looking for. So it was that for the second time that day the car came to a gradual stop and the two friends hopped out.

Now, before the Professor could even blink the Captain was snapping his fingers at a waiter "Oi! You!" calling out excitedly for "Two ice-cold ones

for me and my friend", and settling himself into a seat under a parasol out on the café's sun-drenched terrace. "Would you kindly make mine a cup of tea?" asked Professor Mettā to the waiter in the most gentlemanly of ways when he had caught up with his friend. "I'm terribly sorry sir," said the waiter to the Captain in extreme politeness "but I shall have to make it two cups of tea". Handing him the menu he pointed out exactly what was available.



“Please understand,” continued the waiter, “that as far as drinks are concerned only tea, coffee, juices and mineral water are served here.” It wasn’t the news that the Captain had wanted to hear, and he sat there dumbfounded, his face turning a slightly brighter shade of purple. After a few seconds staring coldly in disbelief at what was in front of his eyes, a few seconds which seemed like a few hours, the Captain jumped clumsily to his feet. Knocking over his chair in the process,

and blurting out bluntly to his companion “C’mon Prof, let’s go find a proper place to get refreshed,” he made to leave but he couldn't work out whether to go this way or that, so he stood plumb still in the middle of the terrace looking lost. The Professor, not yet having taken a seat, thought a silent little “Oh” to himself and, with his neighbour on his left and the waiter on his right, he paused to give due consideration to the predicament he found himself in. As he did so

he became aware of the gentle touch of his breath as it came in and went out through his nostrils. With this he felt a sense of

calmness, confidence and certainty fill him up, and for a very small moment in time everything became delightfully quiet.



“Well I never! Just look who it is!” exclaimed the Professor, breaking the silence in the most serene manner

possible, as out of the corner of his eye he spotted a familiar and friendly figure fast approaching.

"How wonderful!" he proclaimed out loud. It was the soft and sweet dulcet tones of the voice of their neighbour and good friend Mrs. Melanie Mangala that shook the Captain from his funk. "Gentlemen, gentlemen!" was what he first heard, followed by "What a lovely surprise to see you out here on such a fine day!" Slowly the big round face and beaming smile of Mrs. Melanie Mangala, owner and head baker at the finest cake shop in Pleasantville, descended upon them.

Mrs. Melanie Mangala had been running Patisserie Mmm, which was located at number seven Pleasant Parade, just around the corner from where the two friends lived at Pleasant Villas, for many years. Her cakes and pastries were widely acknowledged to be the best, not only in the neighbourhood of Pleasantville, but in the whole of the city. And having been very keen and very loyal customers of her's for so long, the two friends had gotten to know Mrs. Mangala very well indeed



through the years. For her part, Mrs. Mangala, not having had a family of her own, had taken her two neighbours under her wing somewhat, endlessly showering them with maternal affection in the form of sweet treats and the like.

The Captain in particular, being as he was extremely fond of the occasional pastry, held Mrs. Melanie in the highest of high esteems.

Stepping forward a little, the Professor beckoned their friend to sit with them. "Please! Please dear Mrs.

Mangala, do come and join us! What a lovely surprise this is!" "Indeed it is lovely," she responded gracefully, "but I could only possibly accept your kind invitation on the condition that I am permitted to treat you." Without waiting for the

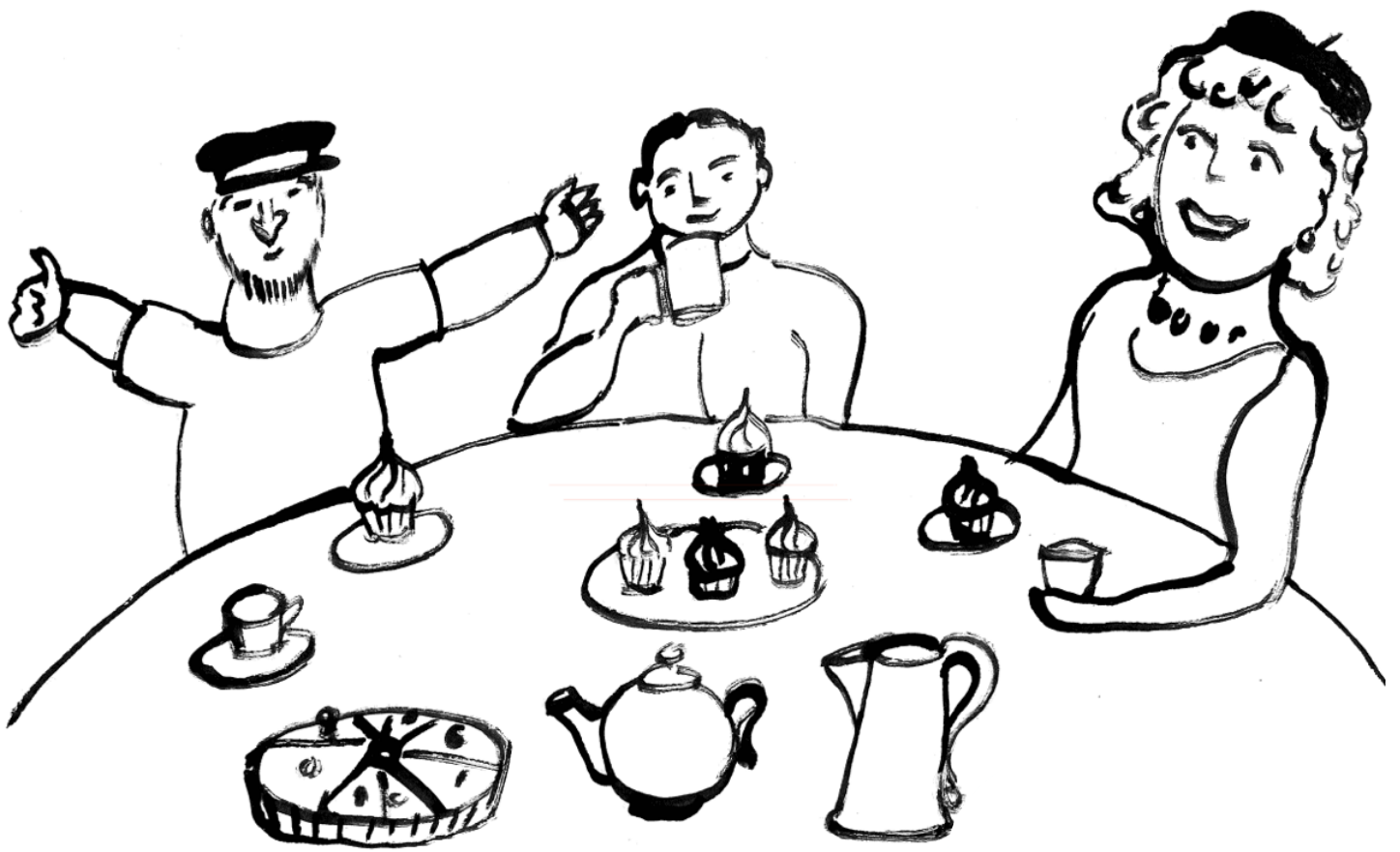
response she turned to the waiter, who all the while had been waiting in the shadows, and said to him very softly but ever so firmly "A pot of tea for three, please," before rounding off the order with "and a platter full of your most mouthwatering gateaux to go with it, if you would be so obliging!" The Captain, alert to the presence of his friend and to the offer of tea and something sweet to nibble on, picked up his chair and sheepishly offered a mumbled "It's nice to see you too, Mrs.

Melanie" as a kind of greeting. Then, after embracing one another as friends in that part of the world do, the three of them sat down together and it was there on the café terrace that they bathed for a while in the warmth of each other's company and in the golden honey coloured light of the mid-afternoon sunshine.

"So gentlemen, please do tell," started Mrs. Mangala once she was comfortably settled into her chair, "but what

is it exactly that you have been up to on this very fine day?” “Been fishing” replied the Captain, not without a little pride in his heart. “Really? Out on the great lake? Did you catch much?” continued the kind hearted cake maker. “Course we did” retorted the Captain instantly, looking up at the Professor in the hope that he might back him up a little. The angelic Mrs. Mangala also turned to the Professor with an asking look. “Oh, I wasn’t fishing,” he said by means of clarification, “I was

merely the oarsman. It’s the Captain who’s the angler!” So turning back to the Captain, Mrs. Mangala pursued the conversation a little further. “Are you going to tell me my dear friend how big a fish it was that you caught?” The inquisition barely skipped a beat with the arrival of the greatly appreciated and perfectly presented refreshments. “Oh, yea big” he parped, holding his hands about seventy five centimetres apart, while his face started to turn a slightly



brighter shade of purple. “And? Where is it now...” ventured Mrs. Mangala, her huge smile almost jumping out from her face, “this big fish that you caught?”

Professor Mettā, witnessing a rather awkward situation starting to unfold, decided it best that he

sit back a little and enjoy his refreshments and allow the Captain to do all the talking. As he sat there he wasn't sure whether he could see smoke starting to billow out from his neighbour's ears or not. “Well, you see, I returned it to the lake of course...” explained the Captain.

“The fishing permit allows you to land fish only if you promise to put them back afterwards. And that's what I did, didn't I?”

From where the Professor and Mrs. Melanie were sitting it appeared that as these last words rang out from his quivering lips they were met by an almost deathly silence. It was as if the words themselves landed right in front of them on the café terrace, and there, in the broad daylight of the afternoon sunshine they twisted and turned a couple of

times, writhed around a little, and then flipping over as if gasping for breath like a dying fish, the words seemed to strain slowly under the weight of the air before they moved no more. The Captain, now completely lost for words and feeling all alone in his little world shrank into his chair and hoped secretly that the whole universe would swallow him up. The Professor decided afresh that the best thing for him to do would be to send some good wishes to all the

beings of the world. To all the beings of the world that is. And amongst all those beings he made a very special little mention to all the storytellers of the world, and to all those who like listening to stories too.

Hurriedly the fisherman jumped to his feet a second time, knocking over his chair just as he had done previously.

“My oh my!” he exclaimed, tapping his wristwatch several times in quick succession and feigning disbelief, “Is that really the time already?” “I’m

terribly sorry Melanie, but the Prof and I really must be on our way,” he stated, without a shadow of doubt in his voice. “Right now!” he added, failing to give any reason for his sudden haste, and, turning his back on his friends he set off for the car park in a terrible rush. As soon as he set off he spied a red car pulling up and parking right alongside the Professor’s, blocking any chance of immediate escape. . . This was the last thing he was hoping for, and he wasn't shy in letting it be known.

“Hey, you there! You in the red car!” he started up, “Who djya think you are? Where didjya learn to park like that?” he growled like a lion. Words like these started to rain down like hailstones from the Captain's mouth onto the unfortunate driver's car roof, where they bounced and banged, the noise like an icy chill splitting the hitherto warm and friendly afternoon air quite horribly. “Are you stupid or something?” hollered the Captain, following up with “Djya think you're the only driver on the road?” All

these words of abuse and so many more that cannot possibly be mentioned here all landed unwelcome like a boxer's sharp punches on the driver's ears.

Alerted by the din, the Professor, who was still enjoying the company of his cherished friend Mrs. Melanie Mangala, turned to see what was going on.

Immediately he perceived what the noise was all about, and with a very soft and gentle heart he thought a very quiet “Oh!” to himself once more. Upon witnessing

the scene that his travelling companion was making he became aware of the gentle touch of his breath as it came in and went out through his nostrils, and with this he felt a sense of calmness, confidence

and certainty fill him up. Bidding farewell to the elegant maker of the tastiest pastries in Pleasantville, he set off from the café terrace towards the roadside to see of what assistance he could be.



The Captain, having nearly reached the red car, was rolling up his shirtsleeves as if to make for some kind of altercation, all the while throwing more words of abuse in the direction of the driver. But it seemed that his mind was so clouded with anger and frustration that he hadn't quite been watching where he was going. As quick as a flash he was flying up in the air, and then all of a sudden he was coming down flat on his face, in the process hitting his chin on the pavement with such

speed that by the time the Professor got anywhere near, the Captain was out cold. In the midst of his little drama about catching imaginary fish and other people's car parking irregularities he hadn't noticed that one of his shoe laces had come undone and that the pavement was somewhat uneven and full of potholes!

Now of course if this story were a cartoon animation and not the real story that it is, you would perhaps be able to see a circle of tiny little stars dancing crazily around the poor

Captain's head, and you would probably also be able to hear a chorus of miniature blue birds chirping away merrily in the background of his mind comically indicating his dizzy state. However, this was sadly not the case, and the pain reverberating all the way through him from the very tips of the hair on his head right to the very ends of the toenails on his feet was very real and oh so unpleasant indeed. But the first that our friend came to know of what had happened to

him was several hours later when he started to come round rather drowsily and altogether sore-headedly on the back seat of the Professor's car.

His very good friend Professor Mettā, and the very compassionate and ever so understanding driver of the red car, after finding the Captain crumpled in a heap on the pavement and after checking that he was no more than lightly concussed, had together very slowly eased him into the back of the Professor's

faithful old steed. And there they had laid him down and had covered him with a tartan wool blanket so that he could recuperate. Then, after offering his profoundest apologies for his friend's misbehaviour, which the driver of the red car generously and unhesitatingly accepted, the Professor decided that he should

take his friend home to number four Pleasant Villas where he would be able to sleep off the trauma of his day. And so it was that the two friends found themselves travelling homewards, the Professor behind the wheel of his car and the Captain behind him resting in slumbers like a baby.



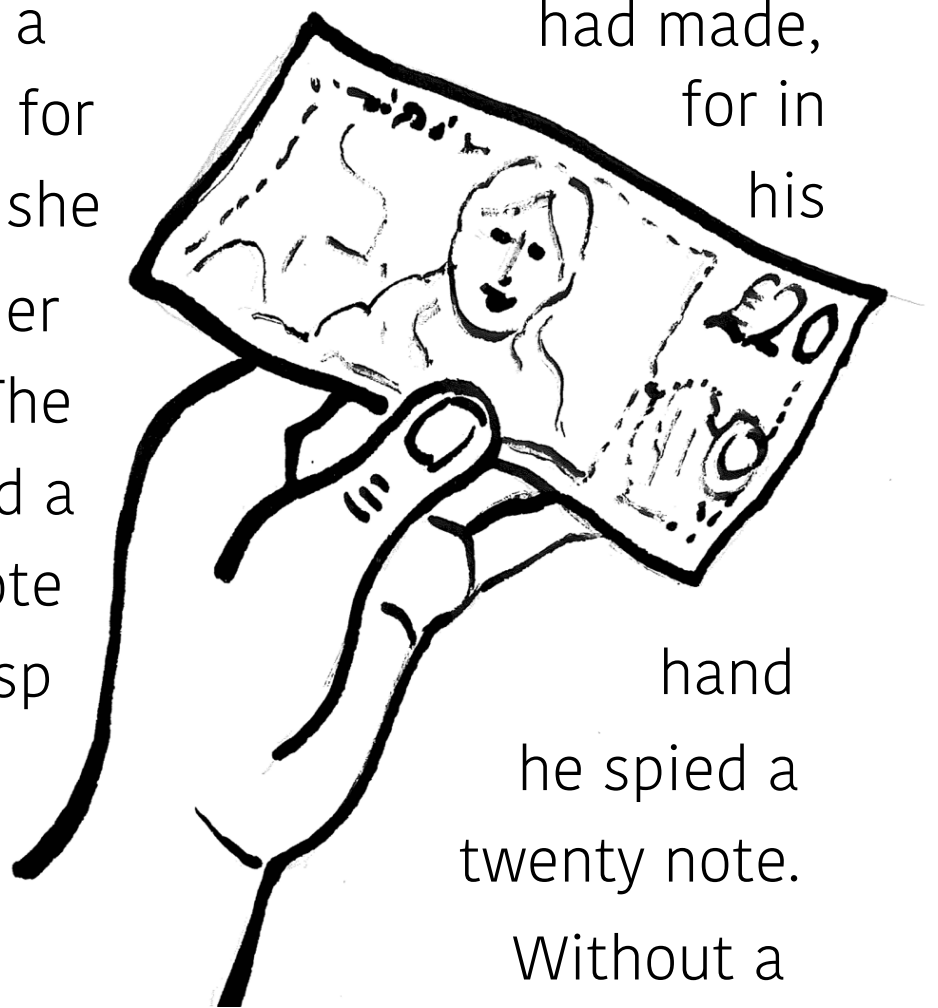
The road back to the city was swarming with cars full of families returning after their days out in the countryside, and the first stars were already glimmering faintly against the pastel colours of the early evening sky. After a long day's drive the fuel gauge on the dashboard of the Professor's car was hovering just above red so he thought it would be a good idea to pull over and top up before making the final stretch into the city. The station forecourt was crowded with

other drivers who had had the same idea, and also with their passengers who had sensed a final opportunity to stretch their tired legs and to indulge in some last gasp ice cream eating before the heat of the day finally evaporated into the night. After having filled his tank to the brim and with his load still snoozing soundly on the back seat of his motor the Professor patiently joined the long and noisy queue at the filling station checkout. "Pump number seven please,"

he said to the cashier as polite as ever when finally his turn came. "Forty" she replied a little abruptly, for the throng of customers at such a late time in the day was obviously a little bit too much for her to handle and she appeared altogether a little flustered. The Professor produced a crisp clean fifty note and an equally crisp and clean "Thank you very much", and taking his change he made for his car across the forecourt. It was as he sat down behind his steering wheel,

after having carefully pulled the door closed in order to not wake the Captain from his dreams, that he became aware of the mistake the cashier

had made, for in his



hand he spied a twenty note.

Without a moment's hesitation, and despite his wish to return his dozing passenger home as swiftly as possible,

the Professor made his way back across the forecourt and rejoined the now even longer queue at the checkout. Standing there alone in the crowd he thought of the young cashier and of all the terrible things that might have come to her if her cash register hadn't tallied at the end of the day. So incredibly certain he was in his mind that he wished her, as he wished all beings, only peace and happiness and not even the slightest trace of hurt or harm, that it was with great joy in his

heart that he stood patiently in line to return what he considered to be not his. Indeed, he would have waited in line all evening and far into the night and the early hours of the morning too had it have been necessary. But fortunately it wasn't, and soon he found himself stepping forward and presenting the cashier with his receipt and the twenty note. "I think there has been a mistake," he explained, and the young cashier, with a look of relief on her face and a feeling of

deep gratitude in her heart exchanged the twenty for a ten.

“Thank you” she mouthed in silent acknowledgement of the Professor’s upright discretion, and at that off he skipped to deliver his cargo to its final destination and to bring his day's journeying to an end.

The cooling of the air was palpable as the four wheels of the Professor’s faithful old car came slowly and softly to a standstill in the middle of the city-bound highway. A logjam of cars and

minibuses transporting hoards of day-trippers back to the metropolis stretched out in front of him as far as he could see. Against the backdrop of the honks and horns of the irritated and impatient drivers rising into the not yet starry sky he thought he could hear a slight murmur emanate from underneath the tartan wool blanket on the passenger seat behind him. “My head!” It was the fisherman whimpering a tiny, self-pitying whimper: “my sorry little head!” “Oh!” thought the

Professor to himself quietly, “the poor Captain really is suffering.” And quite naturally, indeed, second-naturedly, as he sat there in the cockpit of his motor in the middle of the tarmac he sent his good friend and neighbour the very best of his good wishes.

It seemed now that the Captain was fully awake, his whimper raising itself into something altogether more audible. “Traffic jams!” he began in an ever-so slightly dampened roar, “I just

can’t stand tra...”, but strangely, before the word could trip from his tongue he seemed to stop himself mid-sentence and sit there in silence. Complete and utter silence. In the quietude his line of vision switched from the endless queue of vehicles bottlenecking out beyond the front windscreen to fixing upon his good friend the Professor sitting patiently and happily behind the wheel of his automobile, and back again to surveying the lines of stationary traffic. For a good while

his eyes flicked back and forth like this, and, during those moments, if you happened to have been a little fly sitting on the dashboard of the Professor's car, you might have seen the habitual frown of the Captain's face soften somewhat. And in doing so, you might have also witnessed the Captain become overawed with a certain reverence as his eyes came finally to rest on the Professor's calm and contented face. And there the two friends sat in the midst of a jungle of steel, glass, rubber and

tarmac, with car horns tooting like monkeys hooting out from the canopy all around them. But inside the vehicle the two travellers were enveloped in the warmth of a deeply amicable silence.

"Professor," the Captain tentatively started in an uncharacteristically gentle voice, "I've known you for many years, have I not?"

"Indeed you have," replied the Captain's chauffeur joyfully. There then followed another moment's silence before the red-haired

one started up once again. “Yet despite all these years there is still one thing I don’t know about you that I

would very much like to find out,” his turn of phrase resonating with an altogether polite vibration.



The Professor sat there quietly, and as he did so he became aware of the gentle touch of his breath as it came in and went out through his nostrils. With this

he felt a sense of calmness, confidence and certainty fill him up. “Please, if you don’t mind, would you tell me how it is that you don’t get annoyed or

angry or impatient in certain situations, like here in the middle of this traffic jam?”

After quite some moments sitting like this enjoying the new found rhythm of his companion’s metre, moments during which the traffic jam budged not even half an inch, the Professor responded to his friend’s enquiry in the calmest way possible. “My dear friend, please understand that it is very simple,” he began. These ten words washed over the Captain like the sweetest smell of

blossom on an early summertime evening and he drank them up like a parched riverbed. “I sit and I observe my breath as it comes in and goes out of my nostrils, and I send my good wishes to all the beings of the world. To all the beings of the world that is.” And with this the Captain’s face slowly and surely broke out into a huge, beaming, radiant smile. But the Professor wasn’t quite finished. It was with his follow-up phrase: “Perhaps one day you might like to try it yourself,” that the

Professor, like the most skillful archer, sent his words like arrows shooting into to the bull's eye of the Captain's mind. And there they were firmly lodged, never to be moved again.

Shortly, outside and above our friends' heads a tinny pitter-patter of raindrops started to dance on the roof of the car, which within seconds had turned into the thunderous symphony of an almost tropical downpour. It seemed there was no reason whatsoever for the traffic jam to slowly

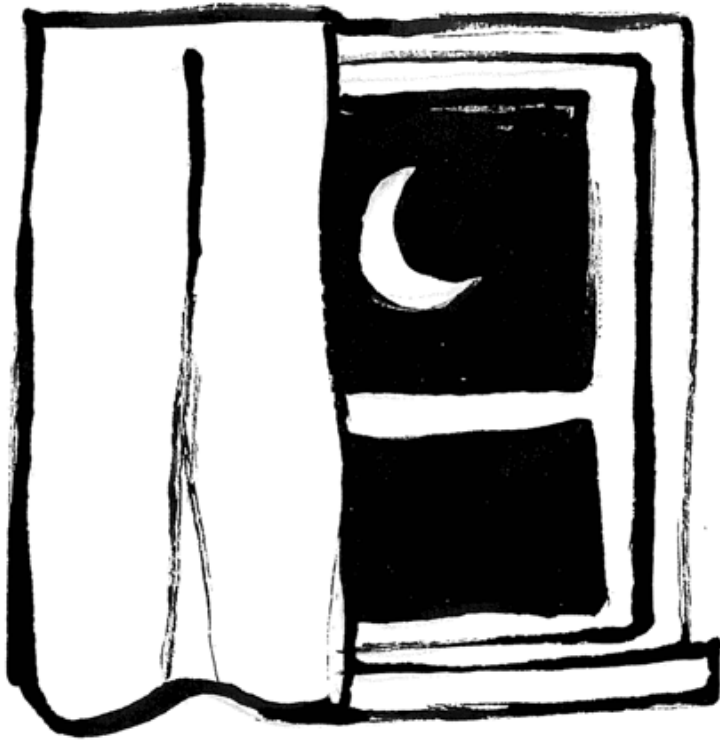
begin to shift, but shift it did, and with it the noise of horns tooting were replaced by the revving of engines and the hum of exhaust pipes. In hardly the blink of an eye the two friends were cruising smoothly homewards, and, in the rear view mirror Professor Mettā wasn't sure whether he could see his neighbour observing his incoming and outgoing breath or not.



The sun had long since gone down behind the quiet calmness of the tiny house at number two Pleasant Villas when the time came for Professor Mettā to sit in complete silence with his eyes gently closed for a while, observing his incoming and outgoing breath, as he had always done like clockwork since before anyone can remember. And after having sat like that for a while the time then also came, as it always had done like clockwork since before anyone can remember, for him to spend a few

moments sitting in silence sending his good wishes to all the beings of the world. To all the beings of the world that is.

As he lay down in bed and shut his eyes that night, and as his body became heavier and heavier, and as his eyelids started to steadily take on the weight of the world around him, he continued to be aware of the gentle touch of his breath as it came in and went out of his nostrils. All the while he continued to send his good wishes to all the beings of the world.



And of all the beings in the world he made a very special little mention to all those with whom he had had the good fortune to share his day: the Captain and his cabbages; the birds and snails in the Captain's garden; the clerk in the kiosk by the shore of the lake where the boats are rented out; all the fish and all the other animals that call the great lake home; the waiter on the sun-drenched café terrace; the Professor's good friend the expert baker Mrs. Melanie Mangala;

the driver of the red car, and of course the young filling station cashier too. To all these beings he sent his good wishes. For all these beings he felt nothing but sympathetic joy. And quite naturally there were countless other beings whose names he had never known and whose faces he had never seen who nevertheless had also been so much part and parcel of his day, and to all those beings he also sent the best of his wishes.

And in so doing a great and glowing wave of

happiness welled up in him from head to toe and he vibrated all over, inside and out, with feelings of good will for all. And once this flow of happiness had filled him up from the very tips of the hair on his head right to the very ends of the toenails on his feet, it didn't stop. It started overflowing into his bedroom, and just as it had filled him up, so too it filled up his bedroom from floor to ceiling. And it didn't stop there either. Through the door and down the stairs and out into his garden it

flowed, and from there, across the hedge into his friend and neighbour the Captain's garden, through his kitchen door and right the way through his house too. From there out across the whole neighbourhood of Pleasantville this feeling of happiness rolled, past Patisserie Mmm at number seven Pleasant Parade, and out beyond the city limits. Straddling the roads, the meadows and the orchards it flowed all the way to the crystal clear waters of the great lake. And, like this, as it

as it continued to spread out it filled the lake up all the way from the dark watery depths below to the gentle ripples of its surface. In doing so the fish and all the other animals that call the lake their home slept that night with a feeling that they were wrapped up tightly in the warm glow of the Professor's good wishes. Further and further the Professor's happiness gently yet relentlessly extended outwards, to the tops of the trees in the forest to the peaks of the mountains looking down over the valley, across to the

café terrace, to the forecourt of the filling station now bathing silently in the moonlight, and beyond, beyond all this it went. Indeed, it didn't stop until the whole world itself and everything in it and everyone that lives there vibrated peacefully all the way through with Professor Mettā's good will for all beings.

And, as his eyelids became too heavy for him to be able to resist the pull of sleep any longer, and just before he finally drifted off soundly and joyfully into the land of dreams,



one final thought of the day flashed through his mind. But what do you think that thought was?

Yes, that's right. You guessed correctly.

Professor Mettā thought to himself a very soft and a very kind and an ever so long "May... all... beings... be... happy."