

Thus Spoke Zarathustra

Prologue

Prologue

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ZARATHUSTRA'S PROLOGUE

Prologue (1) 1

WHEN Zarathustra was thirty years old, he left his home and the lake of his home, and went into the mountains. There he enjoyed his spirit and his solitude, and for ten years did not weary of it. But at last his heart changed, and rising one morning with the rosy dawn, he went before the sun, and spoke to it thus:

You great star! What would your happiness be, had you not those for whom you shine?

For ten years have you climbed here to my cave: you would have wearied of your light and of the journey, had it not been for me, my eagle, and my serpent.

But we waited for you every morning, took from you your overflow, and blessed you for it.

Behold. I am weary of my wisdom, like the bee that has gathered too much honey; I need hands outstretched to take it.

I would rather give away and distribute, until the wise among men once more find joy in their folly, and the poor in their riches.

Therefore must I descend into the deep: as you do in the evening, when you go behind the sea, and give light also to the underworld, you exuberant star!

Like you I have to go down, as men say, to whom I shall descend.

Bless me, then, you tranquil eye, that can look on even the greatest happiness without envy!

Bless the cup that is about to overflow, that the water may flow golden from it, and carry everywhere the reflection of your happiness!

Behold. This cup is again going to empty itself, and Zarathustra is going to be a man again.

Thus began Zarathustra's down-going.

Prologue (2) 2

Zarathustra went down the mountain alone, no one meeting him. When he entered the forest, however, there suddenly stood before him an old man, who had left his holy hut to seek roots in the forest. And thus spoke the old man to Zarathustra:

"No stranger to me is this wanderer: many years ago he passed by. Zarathustra he was called, but he has changed.

Then you carried your ashes up to the mountains: will you now carry your fire into the valleys? Do you not fear the arsonist's punishment?

Yes, I recognize Zarathustra. Pure are his eyes, and no loathing lurks around his mouth. Does he not move like a dancer?

Transformed is Zarathustra; Zarathustra has become a child; an awakened one is Zarathustra: what will you do in the land of the sleepers?

As in the sea have you lived in solitude, and it has supported you. Alas, will you now go ashore? Alas, will you again haul your body by yourself?"

Zarathustra answered: "I love mankind."

"Why," said the saint, "did I go into the forest and the desert? Was it not because I loved men far too well?

Now I love God; men I do not love. Man is a thing too imperfect for me. Love of man would be fatal to me."

Zarathustra answered: "Did I talk of love? I am bringing a gift to men."

"Give them nothing," said the saint. "Instead, take part of their load, and carry it with them - that will be most agreeable to them: if only it is agreeable to you!

If, however, you want to give something to them, give them no more than alms, and let them also beg for it!"

"No," replied Zarathustra, "I give no alms. I am not poor enough for that."

The saint laughed at Zarathustra, and spoke thus: "Then see to it that they accept your treasures! They are distrustful of hermits, and do not believe that we come with gifts.

Our footsteps sound too lonely through the streets. And at night, when they are in bed and hear a man walking nearby long before sunrise, they may ask themselves: Where is this thief going?

Do not go to men, but stay in the forest! Go rather to the animals! Why not be like me - a bear among bears, a bird among birds?"

"And what does the saint do in the forest?" asked Zarathustra.

The saint answered: "I make songs and sing them; and in making songs

I laugh and weep and growl and hum: thus do I praise God.

With singing, weeping, laughing, growling and humming do I praise the God who is my God. But what do you bring us as a gift?"

When Zarathustra had heard these words, he bowed to the saint and said: "What should I have to give you?! Let me rather hurry away lest I take something away from you!" - And thus they parted from one another, the old man and Zarathustra, just like two laughing boys.

When Zarathustra was alone, however, he said to his heart: "Could it be possible?! This old saint in the forest has not yet heard of it, that God is dead!"

Prologue (3) 3

When Zarathustra arrived at the nearest town which is close to the forest, he found many people assembled in the market-place, for it had been announced that a tightrope walker would give a performance. And Zarathustra spoke thus to the people:

I teach you the overman. Man is something to be surpassed. What have you done to surpass him?

All beings thus far have created something beyond themselves: and you want to be the ebb of this great tide, and even return to the beast rather than surpass man?

What is the ape to man? A laughing-stock or a painful embarrassment. And just the same shall man be to the overman: a laughing-stock or a painful embarrassment.

You have made your way from worm to man, and much inside you is still worm. Once you were apes, and still man is more of an ape than any of the apes.

Even the wisest among you is only a conflict and mix of plant and ghost. But do I bid you become ghosts or plants?

Behold, I teach you the overman!

The overman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: The overman shall be the meaning of the earth!

I appeal to you, my brothers, remain true to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes! Poisoners are they, whether they know it or not.

Despisers of life are they, decaying and poisoning themselves, of whom the earth is weary: so let them pass away!

Once sin against God was the greatest sin; but God died, and with him these sinners. To sin against the earth is now the most terrible sin, and to revere the entrails of the unknowable higher than the meaning of the earth!

Once the soul looked contemptuously on the body, and that contempt was supreme: the soul wished the body thin, hideous, and starved. Thus it thought to escape from the body and the earth.

Oh, that soul was itself thin, hideous, and starved; and cruelty was the desire of that soul!

But you, also, my brothers, tell me: What does your body say about your soul? Is your soul not poverty and dirt and wretched contentment?

Truly, a dirty stream is man. One must be a sea, to receive a dirty stream without becoming unclean.

Behold, I teach you the overman: he is this sea; in him your great contempt can pass under and away.

What is your greatest experience? It is the hour of the great contempt. The hour in which even your happiness becomes repulsive to you, and even your reason and virtue.

The hour when you say: "What good is my happiness! It is poverty and dirt and wretched contentment. But my happiness should justify existence itself!"

The hour when you say: "What good is my reason! does it long for knowledge as the lion for his food? It is poverty and dirt and wretched contentment!"

The hour when you say: "What good are my virtues?! As yet they have not made me rage with passion. How weary I am of my good and evil! It is all poverty and dirt and wretched contentment!"

The hour when you say: "What good is my being just and right! I don't see myself as fire and coals. The just and the right, however, are fire and coals."

The hour when we say: "What good is my pity! Is not pity the cross on which he is nailed who loves man? But my pity is not a crucifixion."

Have you ever spoken this way? Have you ever cried this way? Oh! that I could hear you cry like this!

It is not your sin - it is your thrift that cries to heaven; it is the meanness of your sin that cries to heaven.

Where is the lightning to lick you with its tongue? Where is the frenzy with which you should be inoculated?

Behold, I teach you the overman: he is that lightning, he is that frenzy.

When Zarathustra had thus spoken, one of the people called out:

"We've heard enough of the tightrope walker; now let's see him also!" And all the people laughed at Zarathustra. But the tightrope walker, who thought the words were for him, began his performance.

Prologue (4) 4

Zarathustra, however, looked at the people and wondered. Then he spoke thus:

Man is a rope stretched between animal and overman - a rope over an abyss.

A dangerous crossing, a dangerous on-the-way, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous trembling and stopping.

What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal: what can be loved in man is that he is an over-going and a down-going.

I love those who know not how to live except as down-goers, for they are the over-goers.

I love the great despisers, because they are the great reverers, and are rows of longing for the other shore.

I love those who do not first seek a reason beyond the stars for going down and being sacrifices, but sacrifice themselves to the earth, that the earth of the overman may someday arrive.

I love him who lives in order to know, and seeks to know in order that the overman may someday live. Thus he seeks his own down-going.

I love him who works and invents, that he may build a house for the overman, and prepare for him earth, animal, and plant: for thus he seeks his own down-going.

I love him who loves his virtue: for virtue is the will to down-going, and an arrow of longing.

I love him who reserves no drop of spirit for himself, but wants to be entirely the spirit of his virtue: thus he walks as spirit over the bridge.

I love him who makes his virtue his addiction and destiny: thus, for the sake of his virtue, he is willing to live on, or live no more.

I love him who does not desire too many virtues. One virtue is more of a virtue than two, because it is more of a knot for one's destiny to cling to.

I love him whose soul squanders itself, who wants no thanks and gives none back: for he always gives, and desires not to preserve himself.

I love him who is ashamed when the dice fall in his favor, and who then asks: "Am I a dishonest player?" - for he is willing to perish.

I love him who scatters golden words in front of his deeds, and always does more than he promises: for he seeks his own down-going.

I love him who justifies those people of the future, and redeems those of the past: for he is willing to perish by those of the present.

I love him who chastens his God, because he loves his God: for he must perish by the wrath of his God.

I love him whose soul is deep even in being wounded, and may perish from a small experience: thus goes he gladly over the bridge.

I love him whose soul is so overfull that he forgets himself, and all things are in him: thus all things become his down-going.

I love him who is of a free spirit and a free heart: thus is his head only the entrails of his heart; his heart, however, drives him to go down.

I love all who are like heavy drops falling one by one out of the dark cloud that hangs over man: they herald the coming of the lightning, and perish as heralds.

Behold, I am a herald of the lightning, and a heavy drop out of the cloud: the lightning, however, is called over man.

Prologue (5) 5

When Zarathustra had spoken these words, he again looked at the people, and was silent. "There they stand," he said to his heart; "there they laugh: they do not understand me; I am not the mouth for these ears.

Must one first smash their ears, that they may learn to hear with their eyes? Must one clatter like kettledrums and preachers of repentance? Or do they only believe the stammerer?

They have something of which they are proud. What do they call it, that which makes them proud? Education they call it; it distinguishes them from the goatherds.

, Therefore, they dislike to hear the word 'contempt' applied to themselves. So I will appeal to their pride.

I will speak to them of the most contemptible thing: that, however, is the last man!"

And thus spoke Zarathustra to the people:

It is time for man to set a goal for himself. It is time for man to plant the seed of his highest hope.

His soil is still rich enough for it. But that soil will one day be poor and exhausted, and no lofty tree will any longer be able to grow on it.

Alas. There will come a time when man will no longer launch the arrow of his longing beyond man - and the string of his bow will have unlearned to whirl!

I say to you: one must still have chaos in oneself to give birth to a dancing star. I say to you: you still have chaos in yourself.

Alas. There will come a time when man can no longer give birth to any star. Alas. There will come the time of the most despicable man, who can no longer despise himself.

Behold. I show you the last man.

"What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?" - so asks the last man and blinks.

The earth has then become small, and on it there hops the last man who makes everything small. His race is as ineradicable as the flea; the last man lives longest.

"We have invented happiness", say the last men, and they blink.

They have left the regions where it was hard to live; for one needs warmth. One still loves one's neighbor and rubs against him; for one needs warmth.

Becoming ill and being distrustful, they consider sinful: one proceeds carefully. He is a fool who still stumbles over stones or men!

A little poison now and then: that makes pleasant dreams. And much poison in the end, for a pleasant death.

One still works, for work is entertaining. But one is careful lest the entertainment should assault you.

One no longer becomes poor or rich; both are too burdensome. Who still wants to rule? Who still wants to obey? Both are too burdensome.

No shepherd and one herd! Everyone wants the same; everyone is the same: he who feels differently goes voluntarily into the madhouse.

"Formerly all the world was insane", say the most refined, and they blink.

They are clever and know all that has happened: so there is no end to their mockery. People still quarrel, but they are soon reconciled - otherwise it might spoil their digestion.

They have their little pleasures for the day, and their little pleasures for the night, but they have a regard for health.

"We have invented happiness," say the last men, and they blink.

And here ended the first discourse of Zarathustra, which is also called "The Prologue", for at this point the shouting and delight of the crowd interrupted him. "Give us this last man, O Zarathustra" - they called out - "Make us into these last men! Then will we make you a present of the overman!" And all the people laughed and clucked with their tongues. Zarathustra, however, grew sad, and said to his heart:

"They don't understand me: I am not the mouth for these ears.

Perhaps I have lived too long in the mountains; too long have I listened to the brooks and trees: now I speak to them as to the goatherds.

Calm is my soul, and clear, like the mountains in the morning. But they think I am cold, and a mocker with fearful jokes.

And now do they look at me and laugh: and while they laugh they hate me too. There is ice in their laughter."

Prologue (6) 6

Then, however, something happened which made every mouth mute and every eye fixed. For meanwhile the tight-rope walker had begun his performance: he had come out from a little door, and was walking along the rope which was stretched between two towers, so that it hung above the market-place and the people. When he was exactly in the middle, the little door opened once more, and a fellow, dressed like a clown or a buffoon, jumped out and walked rapidly after the first one. "Go on, lame-foot," he cried in a frightful voice, "go on, lazybones, intruder, paleface, or I shall tickle you with my heel! What are you doing here between the towers? In the tower is where you belong. You should be locked up there; you block the way for one better than yourself!" - And with every word he came nearer and nearer. However when he was but a step behind, a terrible thing happened which made every mouth silent and every eye fixed - he uttered a yell like a devil, and jumped over the man who was in his way. This man, when he thus saw his rival win, lost both his head and his footing on the rope, threw away his pole, and he plunged even faster downward into the depth, a whirlpool of arms and legs. The market-place and the people were like the sea in a storm: they rushed apart and over one another, especially where the body was to hit the ground.

Zarathustra, however, remained standing, and just beside him fell the

body, badly injured and disfigured, but not yet dead. After a while consciousness returned to the shattered man, and he saw Zarathustra kneeling beside him. "What are you doing here?" said he at last, "I knew long ago that the devil would trip me up. Now he drags me to hell. will you prevent him?"

"On my honor, friend," answered Zarathustra, "there is nothing of this that you speak: there is no devil and no hell. Your soul will be dead even sooner than your body; therefore, fear nothing more!"

The man looked up distrustfully. "If you speak the truth," he said, "I lose nothing when I lose my life. I am not much more than an animal which has been taught to dance by blows and a few meager morsels."

"Not at all," said Zarathustra, "you have made danger your calling; there is nothing contemptible in that. Now you perish by your calling: therefore I will bury you with my own hands."

When Zarathustra had said this the dying one did not reply further; but he moved his hand as if he sought the hand of Zarathustra in gratitude.

Prologue (7) 7

Meanwhile the evening came on, and the market-place was veiled in darkness. Then the people dispersed, for even curiosity and terror become fatigued. However Zarathustra still sat beside the dead man on the ground, absorbed in thought so that he forgot the time. At last it became night, and a cold wind blew upon the lonely one. Then Zarathustra arose and said to his heart:

Truly, a fine catch of fish has Zarathustra made to-day! It is not a man he has caught, but a corpse.

Uncanny is human existence and as yet without meaning: a buffoon can become a man's fate and fatality.

I want to teach men the meaning of their existence, which is the over-man, the lightning out of the dark cloud of man.

But I am still far from them, and my senses speak not to their senses. To men I am still something between a fool and a corpse.

Dark is the night, Dark are the ways of Zarathustra. Come, you cold and stiff companion! I will carry you to the place where I may bury you with my own hands.

Prologue (8) 8

When Zarathustra had said this to his heart, he put the corpse on his shoulders and set out on his way. He had not gone a hundred steps, when a man crept up to him and whispered in his ear - and behold it was the buffoon from the tower. "Leave this town, O Zarathustra," he said, "there are too many here who hate you. The good and just hate you, and call you their enemy and despiser; the believers in the true faith hate you, and call you a danger to the multitude. It was lucky for you that you were laughed at; and truly you spoke like a buffoon. It was your good fortune to associate with the dead dog; by so humiliating yourself you have saved your life for today. But leave this town, - or tomorrow I shall jump over you, a living man over a dead one." And when he had said this, the buffoon vanished; But Zarathustra went on through the dark streets.

At the gate of the town the gravediggers met him: they shone their torch on his face, and, recognising Zarathustra, they greatly mocked him. "Zarathustra is carrying away the dead dog: a fine thing that Zarathustra has become a grave-digger! For our hands are too clean for this roast. Will Zarathustra rob the devil of his mouthful? Well then, good luck with your meal! If only the devil were not a better thief than Zarathustra! - he will steal them both, he will eat them both!" And they laughed and put their heads together.

Zarathustra said nothing but went on his way. When he had gone on for two hours, past forests and swamps, he heard too much of the hungry howling of the wolves, and he himself became hungry. So he stopped at a lonely house in which a light was burning.

"Hunger attacks me," said Zarathustra, "like a robber. Among forests and swamps my hunger attacks me, and late in the night.

"My hunger has strange moods. Often it comes to me only after a meal, and today it did not come at all; where has it been?"

And with that, Zarathustra knocked at the door of the house. An old man appeared, who carried a light, and asked: "Who comes to me and my bad sleep?"

"A living man and a dead one," said Zarathustra. "Give me something to eat and drink, I forgot about it during the day. He that feeds the

hungry refresh his own soul, thus speak wisdom."

The old man went back in, but returned shortly and offered Zarathustra bread and wine. "A bad country for the hungry," he said; "that is why I live here. Animals and men come to me, the hermit. But bid your companion eat and drink also, he is wearier than you are." Zarathustra replied: "My companion is dead; I should hardly be able to persuade him." "I don't care," said the old man peevishly; "Whoever knocks at my door must take what I offer him. Eat and be off!"-

Thereafter Zarathustra again went on for two hours, trusting the path and the light of the stars: for he was used to walking at night, and loved to look into the face of all that sleeps. When morning dawned, however, Zarathustra found himself in a thick forest, and he did not see a path anywhere. So he put the dead man in a hollow tree - for he wanted to protect him from the wolves - and he himself lay down on the ground and moss, his head beneath the tree. And soon he fell asleep, tired in body but with a tranquil soul.

Prologue (9) 9

Zarathustra slept a long time and not only the rosy dawn passed over his face, but also the morning. At last, however, his eyes opened: amazed, he gazed into the forest and the stillness; amazed, he gazed into himself. Then he arose quickly, like a seafarer who all at once sees the land, and he rejoiced, for he saw a new truth. And he spoke thus to his heart:

A light has dawned upon me: I need companions - living ones, not dead companions and corpses, which I carry with me wherever I wish.

But I need living companions, who will follow me because they want to follow themselves - wherever I want. A light has dawned upon me. Not to the people is Zarathustra to speak, but to companions! Zarathustra shall not become a shepherd and a sheepdog to the herd!

To lure many from the herd - for that I have come. The people and the herd shall be angry with me: Zarathustra wants to be called a robber by the herdsmen.

I say herdsmen, but they call themselves the good and just. I say herdsmen, but they call themselves the believers in the true faith.

Behold the good and just! Whom do they hate most? The one who

breaks their tables of values, the breaker, the lawbreaker; he, however, is the creator.

Behold the believers of all beliefs! Whom do they hate most? The one who breaks up their tables of values, the breaker, the lawbreaker; he, however, is the creator.

Companions, the creator seeks, not corpses, not herds and believers. Fellow creators the creator seeks- those who write new values on new tables.

Companions, the creator seeks, and fellow harvesters; for with everything is ripe for the harvest. But he lacks the hundred sickles: so he plucks the ears of corn and is annoyed.

Companions, the creator seeks, and such as know how to whet their sickles. They will they be called destroyers, and despisers of good and evil. But they are the harvesters and rejoicers.

Fellow-creators, Zarathustra seeks; fellow harvesters and fellow rejoicers, Zarathustra seeks: what has he to do with herds and shepherds and corpses!

And you, my first companion, farewell! I have buried you well in your hollow tree; I have hidden you from the wolves.

But I part from you; the time has arrived. Between rosy dawn and rosy dawn there came to me a new truth.

I am not to be a shepherd, I am not to be a gravedigger. No more will I speak to the people; for the last time have I spoken to the dead.

I will join the creators, the harvesters, and the rejoicers: I will show them the rainbow and all the steps to the overman.

I will sing my song to the hermits; to the lonesome and the twosome I will sing my song; and to whoever still has ears for the unheard, I will make his heart heavy with my happiness.

I go towards my goal, I follow my course; over those who hesitate and lag behind I will leap. Thus may my going be their down going-down!

Prologue (10) 10

Zarathustra said this to his heart when the sun stood high at noon. Then he looked inquiringly up high, for he heard above him the sharp call of a bird. And Behold! An eagle swept through the air in wide circles, and on it hung a serpent, not like a prey, but like a friend: for it

kept itself coiled round the eagle's neck.

"They are my animals," said Zarathustra, and rejoiced in his heart.

"The proudest animal under the sun and the wisest animal under the sun, - they have come to search for me.

They want to know whether Zarathustra still lives. Truly, do I still live?

I have found it more dangerous among men than among animals; on dangerous paths walks Zarathustra. May my animals lead me!

When Zarathustra had said this, he remembered the words of the saint in the forest, sighed and spoke thus to his heart:

"I wish I were wiser! I wish I were wise from the very heart, like my serpent!

But I am asking the impossible. So I ask my pride that it always go along with my wisdom!

And if my wisdom should someday leave me - Ah, how it loves to fly away! - then may my pride fly with my folly!"

Thus began Zarathustra's down-going.