

"A beautifully conceived
philosophical work"

- IndiesToday



Seven Gifts

"Profound
& insane"

in

Eric Hoffer
Award

The Rain

theSailor

"wonderful, simple yet perfect prose;
every sentence is a work of art"

- Matt McAvoy

“A beautifully conceived philosophical work”

Seven Gifts in The Rain

theSailor

Seven mysterious gifts were sown deep in our world;
then the rains came . . .

A deluge of motley outcasts, led by an exiled rock star and a lonely white dolphin, sweep a young boy onto a wild ride through a maelstrom of parables, that challenge him with the mysteries of the gifts and his role in revealing them.

Ride with the boy; feel with him the rain.

Eric Hoffer Award 2019: Winner - Ebook Fiction

5th Edition: New Year 2020 : © [theSailor](#)

~ ~ ~

The BookLife Prize

"A wonderful current-day twist on fairy tales, faith, subjective morality, and the search for universal truths"

US Review of Books

"Perhaps the most unusual book you'll ever read, it is just as educational and inspiring as Kahlil Gibran's [The Prophet](#), but far more readable and enjoyable"

"Beautifully written tales that capture mind, heart & spirit" - Szoch

"Brilliant .. bizarre .. the details of seamanship are surreal" - Jenny from England

*This story is for Tammy
who my daughter thinks
would have understood*

"The book is beautifully written, in wonderful, simple yet perfect prose; every sentence is a work of art"

Matt McAvoy

~ ~ ~

-- READ ON for some snippets from the story --

Before the Story

BEFORE THIS story began there came into the world a little girl, to whom everything was possible and all things had meaning.

It was obvious to the little girl - long before it was to the scientists - that if she could imagine something then it must exist. Her mind was a part of the Universe, so anything in her mind was also, de facto, part of the Universe, and therefore, in some form, existed.

So the little girl's life was full of wonder and magic: peopled by daring and handsome Princes who rescued damsels in distress, saved woodcutters and milkmaids from tyranny, and rode fine white chargers across the land, their goodness proudly emblazoned across their hearts.

Good fought with Evil all through the early years of her life, and Good always triumphed. So life for the little girl was simple, and she instinctively understood what was meant by the words: ...

[more]

All this the Angel knew well

As did the girl; for she had chosen it

The Young Boy

THE ANGEL finished the little girl's tale and then walked with the boy in silence, towards a tall, thin building that stood alone at the far end of the sands. Lights twinkled from the high, narrow windows, and they could see tiny dots of people entering and leaving by the small door at its base.

The boy broke the silence. "A pity she had to grow up," he said. "But it was a funny time to choose to live, wasn't it, with all those problems?"

The Angel smiled. "No," she answered. "It was a rather interesting time in fact. It was the beginning of an important change in the lives of all the people on Earth - the time when the seven gifts of its guardian were to be unveiled."

The boy looked at her quizzically ...

[more]

~ The First Gift ~

Custer's Last Band

FAR BEYOND the mountains that encircled the kingdom of the Snow Queen, deep within the swirling high altitude mists forever present in those regions, there lived, in a small cave cleft between two rocks, a retired rock 'n' roll singer called Coalhole Custer. He was a strange man, as befits his calling, with a wild beard and long, flowing yellow hair. His music had been way ahead of its time and so he had retired (not entirely voluntarily), penniless and unappreciated at the age of thirty three, to live alone in the mountains with only the company of a small cat and his thirteen string guitar.

But Coalhole Custer was content. He had room to breathe that clean, rarefied air that sparkled forever round the mountaintops, and he had time for his thoughts. The solitude of those mountains freed his mind and let it fly to all manner of strange places, in a way that musicians' drugs had never been able to. He was happy simply to dream his dreams and sing his songs, and allow his restless mind to wander whither it would ...

[\[more\]](#)

*The young boy closed the First Book
and sat a while with his thoughts
in the lonely tower on the beach
And the Angel watched over him*

Country Garden

THE ANGEL looked up and smiled as the boy approached. She was on her knees raking out a patch of soil near the far end of her cottage garden.

"How do you think the garden is looking?" she called out. The boy sighed ruefully. Nothing in life is ever straightforward, he thought. First the story; now the Angel. Why approach something directly when you can go round the houses; or perhaps the garden in this case. Any faint hopes he had held of the whole business being cancelled when he couldn't find the gift vanished. The Angel would coax it out of him if it took all of Eternity. The gift was in the story somewhere and she would make him find it. The thought was faintly amusing, almost.

"Very nice," he replied noncommittally. He glanced around. It was actually a rather interesting garden: untidy, unstructured, but curiously beautiful; with an air of something slightly mysterious about it; almost magical ...

[more]

~ The Second Gift ~

Seven Days in the Death of Nellie Matilda

IN A small grimy industrial town, far removed from the splendours of the Snow Queen's city, an old woman lay dying in a hospital bed. Further along the corridor, and from which the old woman was equally far removed in a somewhat different sense, a much younger and very pregnant woman was going into labour. Whether there is any connection between these two scenarios I leave you, my long-awaited reader, to decide as the story progresses.

For all that it was a small grimy industrial town its hospital had the very latest equipment and first rate medical staff. The Senior Consultant was greatly respected by his peers throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom and he had brought together into this nondescript little hospital a team of doctors and nurses that was second to no other in the land. Just why this should have happened has no relevance to the story so we shall not pursue it. Suffice it to say that the hospital was the best ...

[more]

*The young boy closed the Second Book
and sat a while with his thoughts
in the lonely tower on the beach
And the Angel watched over him*

The Journey

THE BOY finally closed the second book having given up all hope of finding the last page. What could be missing from this version of the old lady's life, that could in any way be related to a gift? He felt little wiser than when he had opened the book. He had hoped to find this second gift in time to spend the day fishing as the weather was so lovely, but the chances now seemed very slim. Feeling rather fed up with it all he went in search of his tormentor.

The Angel smiled as he approached looking thoroughly glum. "Come on," she called out encouragingly, "let's go for a walk. It's a lovely day and I've got something to show you."

The boy sighed ...

[more]

~ The Third Gift ~

Charlie's Angel

FAR AWAY at sea, many miles from the land of the Snow Queen, a small sailing ship was battling for survival in a fierce winter storm. Deeply laden with pearls and spices, silks, precious metals, artefacts and all manner of aphrodisiacs for the nobles of the Snow Queen's court, the little vessel was struggling to round the notorious Cape of Storms. It was the dead of winter and she was beating hard against a full gale to try and squeeze through the narrow gap left between land and ice-cap.

And the wind had shifted as she stood close inshore for a favourable eddy in the current. A scant five miles off the coast she had found herself suddenly on a dangerous lee shore. Instead of battling to round the Cape, she was now battling to avoid being blown onto it; onto the jagged rocks that fringed that inhospitable coastline ...

[more]

*The young boy closed the Third Book
and sat a while with his thoughts
in the lonely tower on the beach
And the Angel watched over him*

Gone Fishing

IT WAS soon after midday when the Angel entered the room. The young boy was sat at the desk staring rather glassy-eyed at the third story, which still lay open in front of him. He felt tired and fed up. There seemed to be all sorts of possibilities in this one. The gift could be almost anything - love, eternity, hope, life; anything. He could not sort out which one.

He did not seem to be doing very well so far. He felt sure the Angel would soon despair of him. Whatever it was he had to do on Earth, he was beginning to think he was just not capable of it.

He swivelled in his chair at the sound of the door opening, and was surprised to see the Angel standing there. He shrugged his shoulders apologetically.

"I can't seem to figure out this one at all," he said, with a sigh. "There are so many alternatives. What is it?"

The Angel shook her head slowly ...

[more]

~ The Fourth Gift ~

Flight of a Honey Bee

HENRY WAS a small, anthropomorphic honey bee. He had a startling black and yellow body, covered with hairs for trapping pollen, and four hard-working, whirring wings. He also had five eyes, two feelers, six legs, three skins, four lips, four Malpighian tubes, two mandibular glands, two salivary glands, eight wax glands, three body segments, a very large multiple brain, and a sting - among other things. He was, for all his apparent insignificance, a complex little creature. He was also - being a worker bee - technically a 'she', although sexually undeveloped. However, Henry was an aggressive little honey bee, always buzzing around, shouting and telling the other bees what to do; which masculine trait explains both name and pronoun.

Whenever a worker bee returned to the hive after a hard day searching for nectar, she would perform a ritual dance to show the others where the best nectar was. Henry was always around at this time, and the moment he deduced from the dance where the nectar was he would zoom off at great speed, cussing and buzzing, little wings whirring madly as he strove to get ahead ...

[more]

*The young boy closed the Fourth Book
and sat a while with his thoughts
in the lonely tower on the beach
And the Angel watched over him*

Leaning on a Gate

THE BOY leaned quietly on the little white-painted wicket gate leading into the Angel's garden. He watched her carefully hoeing around the bean plants in her vegetable patch, which was kept as beautifully as the rest of the garden.

It was a magical garden this, tended so affectionately by the Angel. A hotch-potch of flowers, fruit trees, shrubs and vegetables, with old roses and clematis roaming willy-nilly around them all. Honeysuckle and ivy almost covered the far wall, hanging in beautifully untidy loops around the front door of her cottage, and the air was filled with a fascinating mixture of scents ...

[more]

~ The Fifth Gift ~

The Philosopher's Stone

ONE LOVELY spring day a philosopher was strolling through the woods, pondering on the questions of the time. And they were confusing times in the land of the Snow Queen, especially for an old, traditional philosopher like him.

For seventy years now he had lived in that kingdom, most of his time spent on the only quest that need ever concern a true philosopher - the interminable struggle to understand the purpose of his own existence. Why he should live. Why he should live here. Where this curious thing called human life came from; and where it was going to.

He certainly didn't like the direction it seemed to be going in now. His years of quiet contemplation had been thrown into turmoil by the rolling waves of technology now sweeping across the kingdom. Questions that had once occupied him for months of deep solitary thought followed by weeks of complex discussion with colleagues, now seemed to be answered at the press of a button. His world was full of winking lights and buzzers, spewing forth rationalised explanations that the half-baked intellectuals confused with truth

[more]

*The young boy closed the Fifth Book
and sat a while with his thoughts
in the lonely tower on the beach
And the Angel watched over him*

Get Thee Behind Me

IT WAS late in the evening when the boy finally went in search of the Angel. He had spent a long time struggling with this fifth story. Intelligence? Knowledge? But something did not quite fit. He felt there was something missing; as though the story were incomplete. The magician appeared to have triumphed, which did not seem right; and yet there was a clear hint at the end that he had not. The magician had obviously overlooked something; and that something would seem to be the clue. The boy had clearly missed it as well.

He found the Angel in her cottage, snug beside a cosy fire; for it was a cold night. The boy was glad to join her and he drew up a chair into the warm glow thrown out by the crackling logs. The Angel made tea for them both.

“There is something missing in that story ...

[more]

~ The Sixth Gift ~

George and the Weed

AFTER THE disappearance of the Snow Queen on her voyage to the strange planet her daughter, the Ice Princess, was crowned Queen in her place. She became the seventh queen to reign over the kingdom, and seemingly the most benign, despite her cold nature.

The old rigid social mores and restrictions were swept aside; rules relaxed and regulations rescinded. The Queen's subjects were encouraged to express themselves, in the arts, music and fashion, dancing and singing. Money flowed from the royal coffers, jobs were provided for everyone, and no-one went hungry.

The Queen looked after all. Her mighty army of ministers built huge housing and entertainment complexes for the people, roads and railways, dance halls and leisure centres. Every household had a car and television, every man a wife, every child a social worker. The land flowed with milk and honey; even the clouds and the cuckoos ...

[\[more\]](#)

*The young boy closed the Sixth Book
and sat a while with his thoughts
in the lonely tower on the beach
And the Angel watched over him*

The Neverending Story

THE BOY laughed. "He didn't wreck the place again, did he?"

"Of course not!" The Angel was short ...

[more]

~ The Seventh Gift ~

The Beauty of The Beast

QUITE WHAT Coalhole Custer's guitar and left arm were doing poking out of the smouldering ashes of the Snow Queen's palace, we may never know. A more enquiring mind than George's might have hung around to see what would happen. George, however, had had enough.

So far as he could tell, there was not a living soul left in the land - not a person nor a thing, save only his garden. Perhaps the weeds would take care of that; or maybe that bearded weirdo of a pop singer - if that really was him under the ashes - could do it. For George had no intention of staying around himself.

He took one last long look at the garden, a blaze of colour and cheer amidst the desolate, smoking landscape. It was a nice garden, he thought; who would have believed it could cause so much trouble. He hoped it would be alright without him. He experienced a slight twinge of conscience at leaving it; and almost began to feel that he could be persuaded to stay.

But a sudden rumbling noise from the ashes of the palace persuaded him otherwise. George turned and fled ...

[more]

*The young boy walked for a long while
after this final story
away from the lonely tower
and down towards the sea*

[more]

I Come Not to Bring Peace

THE ANGEL watched the young boy trudging wearily along the sand, his hands deep in his pockets and his head bowed low. She saw him stop and talk to some fishermen hauling their nets by the shore ...

[more]

*"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers:
for thereby some have met the Angel unawares"*

~ ~ ~

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