

PLAINTEXT

The studio was filled with the rich odour of roses, and when the light summer wind stirred amidst the trees of the garden, there came through the open door the heavy scent of the lilac, or the more delicate perfume of the pink-flowering thorn.

From the corner of the divan of Persian saddle-bags on which he was lying, smoking, as was his custom, innumerable cigarettes, Lord Henry Wotton could just catch the gleam of the honey-sweet and honey-coloured blossoms of a laburnum, whose tremulous branches seemed hardly able to bear the burden of a beauty so flamelike as theirs; and now and then the fantastic shadows of birds in flight flitted across the long tussore-silk curtains that were stretched in front of the huge window, producing a kind of momentary Japanese effect, and making him think of those pallid, jade-faced painters of Tokyo who, through the medium of an art that is necessarily immobile, seek to convey the sense of swiftness and motion. The sullen murmur of the bees shouldering their way through the long unmown grass, or circling with monotonous insistence round the dusty gilt horns of the straggling woodbine, seemed to make the stillness more oppressive. The dim roar of London was like the bourdon note of a distant organ.

In the centre of the room, clamped to an upright easel, stood the full-length portrait of a young man of extraordinary personal beauty, and in front of it, some little distance away, was sitting the artist himself, Basil Hallward, whose sudden disappearance some years ago caused, at the time, such public excitement and gave rise to so many strange conjectures.

As the painter looked at the gracious and comely form he had so skilfully mirrored in his art, a smile of pleasure passed across his face, and seemed about to linger there. But he suddenly started up, and closing his eyes, placed his fingers upon the lids, as though he sought to imprison within his brain some curious dream from which he feared he might awake.

"It is your best work, Basil, the best thing you have ever done," said Lord Henry languidly. "You must certainly send it next year to the Grosvenor. The Academy is too large and too vulgar. Whenever I have gone there, there have been either so many people that I have not been able to see the pictures, which was dreadful, or so many pictures that I have not been able to see the people, which was worse. The Grosvenor is really the only place."

"I don't think I shall send it anywhere," he answered, tossing his head back in that odd way that used to make his friends laugh at him at Oxford. "No, I won't send it anywhere."

Lord Henry elevated his eyebrows and looked at him in amazement through the thin blue wreaths of smoke that curled up in such fanciful whorls from his heavy, opium-tainted cigarette. "Not send it anywhere? My dear fellow, why? Have you any reason? What odd chaps you painters are! You do anything in the world to gain a reputation. As soon as you have one, you seem to want to throw it away. It is silly of you, for there is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about. A portrait like this would set you far above all the young men in England, and make the old men quite jealous, if old men are ever capable of any emotion." "I know you will laugh at me," he replied, "but I really can't exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it."

Lord Henry stretched himself out on the divan and laughed.

"Yes, I knew you would; but it is quite true, all the same."

"Too much of yourself in it! Upon my word, Basil, I didn't know you were so vain; and I really can't see any resemblance between you, with your rugged strong face and your coal-black hair, and this young Adonis, who looks as if he was made out of ivory and rose-leaves. Why, my dear Basil, he is a Narcissus, and you—well, of course you have an intellectual expression and all that. But beauty, real beauty, ends where an intellectual expression begins. Intellect is in itself a mode of exaggeration, and destroys the harmony of any face. The moment one sits down to think, one becomes all nose, or all forehead, or something horrid. Look at the successful men in any of the learned professions. How perfectly hideous they are! Except, of course, in the Church. But then in the Church they don't think. A bishop keeps on saying at the age of eighty what he was told to say when he was a boy of eighteen, and as a natural consequence he always looks absolutely delightful. Your mysterious young friend, whose name you have never told me, but whose picture really fascinates me, never thinks. I feel quite sure of that. He is some brainless beautiful creature who should be always here in winter when we have no flowers to look at, and always here in summer when we want something to chill our intelligence. Don't flatter yourself, Basil: you are not in the least like him."

"You don't understand me, Harry," answered the artist. "Of course I am not like him. I know that perfectly well. Indeed, I should be sorry to look like him. You shrug your shoulders? I am telling you the truth. There is a fatality about all physical and intellectual distinction, the sort of fatality that seems to dog through history the faltering steps of kings. It is better not to be different from one's fellows. The ugly and the stupid have the best of it in this world. They

can sit at their ease and gape at the play. If they know nothing of victory, they are at least spared the knowledge of defeat. They live as we all should live—undisturbed, indifferent, and without disquiet. They neither bring ruin upon others, nor ever receive it from alien hands. Your rank and wealth, Harry; my brains, such as they are—my art, whatever it may be worth; Dorian Gray's good looks—we shall all suffer for what the gods have given us, suffer terribly."

"Dorian Gray? Is that his name?" asked Lord Henry, walking across the studio towards Basil Hallward.

"Yes, that is his name. I didn't intend to tell it to you."

"But why not?"

"Oh, I can't explain. When I like people immensely, I never tell their names to any one. It is like surrendering a part of them. I have grown to love secrecy. It seems to be the one thing that can make modern life mysterious or marvellous to us. The commonest thing is delightful if one only hides it. When I leave town now I never tell my people where I am going. If I did, I would lose all my pleasure. It is a silly habit, I dare say, but somehow it seems to bring a great deal of romance into one's life. I suppose you think me awfully foolish about it?"

"Not at all," answered Lord Henry, "not at all, my dear Basil. You seem to forget that I am married, and the one charm of marriage is that it makes a life of deception absolutely necessary for both parties. I never know where my wife is, and my wife never knows what I am doing. When we meet—we do meet occasionally, when we dine out together, or go down to the Duke's—we tell each other the most absurd stories with the most serious faces. My wife is very good at it—much better, in fact, than I am. She never gets confused over her dates, and I always do. But when she does find me out, she makes no row at all. I sometimes wish she would; but she merely laughs at me."

"I hate the way you talk about your married life, Harry," said Basil Hallward, strolling towards the door that led into the garden. "I believe that you are really a very good husband, but that you are thoroughly ashamed of your own virtues. You are an extraordinary fellow. You never say a moral thing, and you never do a wrong thing. Your cynicism is simply a pose."

"Being natural is simply a pose, and the most irritating pose I know," cried Lord Henry, laughing; and the two young men went out into the garden together and ensconced themselves on a long bamboo seat that stood in the shade of a tall laurel bush. The sunlight slipped over the polished leaves. In the grass, white daisies were tremulous.

After a pause, Lord Henry pulled out his watch. "I am afraid I must be going, Basil," he murmured, "and before I go, I insist on your answering a question I put to you some time ago."

"What is that?" said the painter, keeping his eyes fixed on the ground.

"You know quite well."

"I do not, Harry."

"Well, I will tell you what it is. I want you to explain to me why you won't exhibit Dorian Gray's picture. I want the real reason."

"I told you the real reason."

"No, you did not. You said it was because there was too much of yourself in it. Now, that is childish."

"Harry," said Basil Hallward, looking him straight in the face, "every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter. The sitter is merely the accident, the occasion. It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself. The reason I will not exhibit this picture is that I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my own soul."

Lord Henry laughed. "And what is that?" he asked.

"I will tell you," said Hallward; but an expression of perplexity came over his face.

"I am all expectation, Basil," continued his companion, glancing at him.

"Oh, there is really very little to tell, Harry," answered the painter; "and I am afraid you will hardly understand it. Perhaps you will hardly believe it."

Lord Henry smiled, and leaning down, plucked a pink-petalled daisy from the grass and examined it. "I am quite sure I shall understand it," he replied, gazing intently at the little golden, white-feathered disk, "and as for believing things, I can believe anything, provided that it is quite incredible."

The wind shook some blossoms from the trees, and the heavy lilac-blooms, with their clustering stars, moved to and fro in the languid air. A grasshopper began to chirrup by the wall, and like a blue thread a long thin dragon-fly floated past on its brown gauze wings. Lord Henry felt as if he could hear Basil Hallward's heart beating, and wondered what was coming.

"The story is simply this," said the painter after some time. "Two months ago I went to a crush at Lady Brandon's. You know we poor artists have to show ourselves in society from time to time, just to remind the public that we are not savages. With an evening coat and a white tie, as you told me once, anybody, even a stock-broker, can gain a reputation for being civilized. Well, after I had been in the room about ten minutes, talking to huge overdressed

dowagers and tedious academicians, I suddenly became conscious that some one was looking at me. I turned half-way round and saw Dorian Gray for the first time. When our eyes met, I felt that I was growing pale. A curious sensation of terror came over me. I knew that I had come face to face with some one whose mere personality was so fascinating that, if I allowed it to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself. I did not want any external influence in my life. You know yourself, Harry, how independent I am by nature. I have always been my own master; had at least always been so, till I met Dorian Gray. Then—but I don't know how to explain it to you. Something seemed to tell me that I was on the verge of a terrible crisis in my life. I had a strange feeling that fate had in store for me exquisite joys and exquisite sorrows. I grew afraid and turned to quit the room. It was not conscience that made me do so: it was a sort of cowardice. I take no credit to myself for trying to escape."

"Conscience and cowardice are really the same things, Basil. Conscience is the trade-name of the firm. That is all."

"I don't believe that, Harry, and I don't believe you do either. However, whatever was my motive—and it may have been pride, for I used to be very proud—I certainly struggled to the door. There, of course, I stumbled against Lady Brandon. 'You are not going to run away so soon, Mr. Hallward?' she screamed out. You know her curiously shrill voice?"

"Yes; she is a peacock in everything but beauty," said Lord Henry, pulling the daisy to bits with his long nervous fingers.

"I could not get rid of her. She brought me up to royalties, and people with stars and garters, and elderly ladies with gigantic tiaras and parrot noses. She spoke of me as her dearest friend. I had only met her once before, but she took it into her head to lionize me. I believe some picture of mine had made a great success at the time, at least had been chattered about in the penny newspapers, which is the nineteenth-century standard of immortality. Suddenly I found myself face to face with the young man whose personality had so strangely stirred me. We were quite close, almost touching. Our eyes met again. It was reckless of me, but I asked Lady Brandon to introduce me to him. Perhaps it was not so reckless, after all. It was simply inevitable. We would have spoken to each other without any introduction. I am sure of that. Dorian told me so afterwards. He, too, felt that we were destined to know each other."

"And how did Lady Brandon describe this wonderful young man?" asked his companion. "I know she goes in for giving a rapid precis of all her guests. I remember her bringing me up to a truculent and red-faced old gentleman

covered all over with orders and ribbons, and hissing into my ear, in a tragic whisper which must have been perfectly audible to everybody in the room, the most astounding details. I simply fled. I like to find out people for myself. But Lady Brandon treats her guests exactly as an auctioneer treats his goods. She either explains them entirely away, or tells one everything about them except what one wants to know."

"Poor Lady Brandon! You are hard on her, Harry!" said Hallward listlessly.

"My dear fellow, she tried to found a salon, and only succeeded in opening a restaurant. How could I admire her? But tell me, what did she say about Mr. Dorian Gray?"

"Oh, something like, 'Charming boy—poor dear mother and I absolutely inseparable. Quite forget what he does—afraid he—doesn't do anything—oh, yes, plays the piano—or is it the violin, dear Mr. Gray?' Neither of us could help laughing, and we became friends at once."

"Laughter is not at all a bad beginning for a friendship, and it is far the best ending for one," said the young lord, plucking another daisy.

Hallward shook his head. "You don't understand what friendship is, Harry," he murmured—"or what enmity is, for that matter. You like every one; that is to say, you are indifferent to every one."

"How horribly unjust of you!" cried Lord Henry, tilting his hat back and looking up at the little clouds that, like ravelled skeins of glossy white silk, were drifting across the hollowed turquoise of the summer sky. "Yes; horribly unjust of you. I make a great difference between people. I choose my friends for their good looks, my acquaintances for their good characters, and my enemies for their good intellects. A man cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies. I have not got one who is a fool. They are all men of some intellectual power, and consequently they all appreciate me. Is that very vain of me? I think it is rather vain."

"I should think it was, Harry. But according to your category I must be merely an acquaintance."

"My dear old Basil, you are much more than an acquaintance."

"And much less than a friend. A sort of brother, I suppose?"

"Oh, brothers! I don't care for brothers. My elder brother won't die, and my younger brothers seem never to do anything else."

"Harry!" exclaimed Hallward, frowning.

"My dear fellow, I am not quite serious. But I can't help detesting my relations. I suppose it comes from the fact that none of us can stand other people having the same faults as ourselves. I quite sympathize with the rage of

the English democracy against what they call the vices of the upper orders. The masses feel that drunkenness, stupidity, and immorality should be their own special property, and that if any one of us makes an ass of himself, he is poaching on their preserves. When poor Southwark got into the divorce court, their indignation was quite magnificent. And yet I don't suppose that ten per cent of the proletariat live correctly."

"I don't agree with a single word that you have said, and, what is more, Harry, I feel sure you don't either."

Lord Henry stroked his pointed brown beard and tapped the toe of his patent-leather boot with a tasselled ebony cane. "How English you are Basil! That is the second time you have made that observation. If one puts forward an idea to a true Englishman—always a rash thing to do—he never dreams of considering whether the idea is right or wrong. The only thing he considers of any importance is whether one believes it oneself. Now, the value of an idea has nothing whatsoever to do with the sincerity of the man who expresses it. Indeed, the probabilities are that the more insincere the man is, the more purely intellectual will the idea be, as in that case it will not be coloured by either his wants, his desires, or his prejudices. However, I don't propose to discuss politics, sociology, or metaphysics with you. I like persons better than principles, and I like persons with no principles better than anything else in the world. Tell me more about Mr. Dorian Gray. How often do you see him?"

"Every day. I couldn't be happy if I didn't see him every day. He is absolutely necessary to me."

"How extraordinary! I thought you would never care for anything but your art."

"He is all my art to me now," said the painter gravely. "I sometimes think, Harry, that there are only two eras of any importance in the world's history. The first is the appearance of a new medium for art, and the second is the appearance of a new personality for art also. What the invention of oilpainting was to the Venetians, the face of Antinous was to late Greek sculpture, and the face of Dorian Gray will some day be to me. It is not merely that I paint from him, draw from him, sketch from him. Of course, I have done all that. But he is much more to me than a model or a sitter. I won't tell you that I am dissatisfied with what I have done of him, or that his beauty is such that art cannot express it. There is nothing that art cannot express, and I know that the work I have done, since I met Dorian Gray, is good work, is the best work of my life. But in some curious way—I wonder will you understand me?—his personality has suggested to me an entirely new manner in art, an

entirely new mode of style. I see things differently, I think of them differently. I can now recreate life in a way that was hidden from me before. 'A dream of form in days of thought' — who is it who says that? I forget; but it is what Dorian Gray has been to me. The merely visible presence of this lad — for he seems to me little more than a lad, though he is really over twenty — his merely visible presence — ah! I wonder can you realize all that that means? Unconsciously he defines for me the lines of a fresh school, a school that is to have in it all the passion of the romantic spirit, all the perfection of the spirit that is Greek. The harmony of soul and body — how much that is! We in our madness have separated the two, and have invented a realism that is vulgar, an ideality that is void. Harry! if you only knew what Dorian Gray is to me! You remember that landscape of mine, for which Agnew offered me such a huge price but which I would not part with? It is one of the best things I have ever done. And why is it so? Because, while I was painting it, Dorian Gray sat beside me. Some subtle influence passed from him to me, and for the first time in my life I saw in the plain woodland the wonder I had always looked for and always missed."

"Basil, this is extraordinary! I must see Dorian Gray."

Hallward got up from the seat and walked up and down the garden. After some time he came back. "Harry," he said, "Dorian Gray is to me simply a motive in art. You might see nothing in him. I see everything in him. He is never more present in my work than when no image of him is there. He is a suggestion, as I have said, of a new manner. I find him in the curves of certain lines, in the loveliness and subtleties of certain colours. That is all."

"Then why won't you exhibit his portrait?" asked Lord Henry.

"Because, without intending it, I have put into it some expression of all this curious artistic idolatry, of which, of course, I have never cared to speak to him. He knows nothing about it. He shall never know anything about it. But the world might guess it, and I will not bare my soul to their shallow prying eyes. My heart shall never be put under their microscope. There is too much of myself in the thing, Harry — too much of myself!"

"Poets are not so scrupulous as you are. They know how useful passion is for publication. Nowadays a broken heart will run to many editions."

"I hate them for it," cried Hallward. "An artist should create beautiful things, but should put nothing of his own life into them. We live in an age when men treat art as if it were meant to be a form of autobiography. We have lost the abstract sense of beauty. Some day I will show the world what it is; and for that reason the world shall never see my portrait of Dorian Gray."

"I think you are wrong, Basil, but I won't argue with you. It is only the intellectually lost who ever argue. Tell me, is Dorian Gray very fond of you?" The painter considered for a few moments. "He likes me," he answered after a pause; "I know he likes me. Of course I flatter him dreadfully. I find a strange pleasure in saying things to him that I know I shall be sorry for having said. As a rule, he is charming to me, and we sit in the studio and talk of a thousand things. Now and then, however, he is horribly thoughtless, and seems to take a real delight in giving me pain. Then I feel, Harry, that I have given away my whole soul to some one who treats it as if it were a flower to put in his coat, a bit of decoration to charm his vanity, an ornament for a summer's day."

CIPHERTEXT

Ymj xyzint bfx knqqji bnym ymj wnhm titzw tk wtxjx, fsi bmjs ymj qnlmy xzrrjw bnsi xynwwji frnixy ymj ywjxx tk ymj lfwjjs, ymjwj hfrj ymwtzlm ymj tujs ittw ymj mjad xhjsy tk ymj qnqfh, tw ymj rtwj ijqnhfyj ujwkzrj tk ymj unsp-kqtbjwnsl ymtws.

Kwtr ymj htwsjw tk ymj inafs tk Ujwxnfs xfiqj-gflx ts bmnhm mj bfx qdnl, xrtpsl, fx bfx mnx hzxytr, nsszrjwfgqj hnlfwjyyjx, Qtwi Mjswd Btyyts htzqi ozxy hfyhm ymj lqjfr tk ymj mtsjd-xbjjy fsi mtsjd-htqtzwwj gqtxxtrx tk f qfgzwszr, bmtxj ywjrztzx gwfsbmjx xjjrji mfwiqd fgqj yt gjfw ymj gzwjjs tk f gjfzyd xt kqfrjqnpj fx ymjnw; fsi stb fsi ymjs ymj kfsyfxynh xmfibx tk gnwix ns kqnlmy kqnyyji fhwtxx ymj qtsl yzxxtwj-xnqp hzwyfnsx ymfy bjwj xywjyhmji ns kwtsy tk ymj mzlj bnsitb, uwtizhns f pnsi tk rtrjsyfw Ofufsxx jkkjhy, fsi rfpns mnr ymnsf tk ymtxj ufqqni, ofij-kfhji ufnsyjwx tk Ytpdt bmt, ymwtzlm ymj rjinr tk fs fwy ymfy nx sjhxxfwnqd nrrtgnqj, xjjp yt htsajd ymj xjsx tk xbnkysjxx fsi rtynts. Ymj xzqqjs rzwrzw tk ymj gjjx xmtzqijwnsl ymjnw bfd ymwtzlm ymj qtsl zsrts lwfxx, tw hnwhqns bnym rtstytstx nsxnxyshj wtzi ymj izxyd lnqy mtwsx tk ymj xywflqnsl btignsj, xjjrji yt rfpj ymj xynqqsjxx rtwj tuuwjxxnaj. Ymj inr wtfw tk Qtsits bfx qnpj ymj gtzwits styj tk f inxyfsy twlfs.

Ns ymj hjsywj tk ymj wttr, hqfruji yt fs zuwnlmy jfxjq, xytti ymj kzqq-qjslym utwywfny tk f dtzsl rfs tk jcywftwinsfwd ujwxtsfq gjfzyd, fsi ns kwtsy tk ny, xtrj qnyyqj inxyfshj fbfd, bfx xnyynsl ymj fwynxy mnrxjqk, Gfxnq Mfqqbfi, bmtxj xzijs inxfuujfwshj xtrj djfwx flt hfzxi, fy ymj ynrj, xzhm uzgqnh jchnyjrjsy fsi lfaj wnxj yt xt rfsd xywflj htsojhyzwjx.

Fx ymj ufnsyjw qtpji fy ymj lwfhntzx fsi htrjqd ktwr mj mfi xt xpnqkzqqd rnwwtwji ns mnx fwy, f xrnqj tk uqjfxzwj ufxxji fhwtxx mnx kfhj, fsi xjjrji

fgtzy yt qnsljw ymjwj. Gzy mj xziijsqd xyfwyji zu, fsi hqtxnsl mnx jdx, uqfhji mnx knsljwx zuts ymj qnix, fx ymtzlm mj xtlmy yt nruwnxts bnymns mnx gwfns xtrj hzwntzx iwjfr kwtr bmnhm mj kjfwji mj rnlmy fbfpj.

"Ny nx dtzw gjxy btwp, Gfxnq, ymj gjxy ymnsl dtz mfaj jajw itsj," xfni Qtwi Mjswd qfslzniqd. "Dtz rzxy hjwyfnsqd xjsi ny sjcy djfw yt ymj Lwtxajstw. Ymj Fhfjrd nx ytt qfwlj fsi ytt azqlfw. Bmjsajw N mfaj ltsj ymjwj, ymjwj mfaj gjjs jnymjw xt rfsd ujtuj ymfy N mfaj sty gjjs fgqj yt xjj ymj unhyzwjx, bmnhm bfx iwjfkzq, tw xt rfsd unhyzwjx ymfy N mfaj sty gjjs fgqj yt xjj ymj ujtuj, bmnhm bfx btwxj. Ymj Lwtxajstw nx wjfqqd ymj tsqd uqfhj."

"N its'y ymnsp N xmfqq xjsi ny fsdbmjwj," mj fsxbjwji, ytxxns mnx mjfi gfhp ns ymfy tii bfd ymfy zxji yt rfpj mnx kwnjsix qfzlm fy mnz fy Tcktwi. "St, N bts'y xjsi ny fsdbmjwj."

Qtwi Mjswd jqjafyji mnx jdgwtbx fsi qttpi fy mnz ns frfejrsy ymwtzlm ymj ymnz gqzj bwjfyx tk xrtpi ymfy hzwqji zu ns xzhm kfshnkzq bmtwqx kwtr mnx mjad, tunzr-yfnsyji hnlfwjyyj. "Sty xjsi ny fsdbmjwj? Rd ijfw kjqqt, bmd? Mfad dtz fsd wjfxs? Bmfy tii hmfux dtz ufnsywx fwj! Dtz it fsdymnsl ns ymj btwqi yt lfnz f wjuzyfnts. Fx xtts fx dtz mfaj tsj, dtz xjjr yt bfsy yt ymwtb ny fbfd. Ny nx xnqqd tk dtz, ktw ymjwj nx tsqd tsj ymnsl ns ymj btwqi btwxj ymfs gjns yfqpji fgtzy, fsi ymfy nx sty gjns yfqpji fgtzy. F utwywfny qnpj ymnx btzqi xjy dtz kfw fgtaj fqq ymj dtzsl rjs ns Jslqfsi, fsi rfpj ymj tqi rjs vznyj ofjqtz, nk tqi rjs fwj jajw hfufgqj tk fsd jrtyns."

"N pstb dtz bnqq qfzlm fy rj," mj wjuqnji, "gzy N wjfqqd hfs'y jcmngny ny. N mfaj uzy ytt rzhm tk rdxjqk nsyt ny."

Qtwi Mjswd xywjyhmji mnrxjqk tzy ts ymj inafz fsi qfzlmji.

"Djx, N psjb dtz btzqi; gzy ny nx vznyj ywzj, fqq ymj xfrj."

"Ytt rzhm tk dtzwxjqk ns ny! Zuts rd btwi, Gfxnq, N inis'y pstb dtz bjwj xt afnz; fsi N wjfqqd hfs'y xjj fsd wjxjrgqfshj gjybjs dtz, bnym dtzw wzllji xywtsl kfjh fsi dtzw htq-gqfhp mfnw, fsi ymnx dtzsl Fitsnx, bmt qttpx fx nk mj bfx rfij tzy tk natwd fsi wtxj-qjfax. Bmd, rd ijfw Gfxnq, mj nx f Sfwhnxxxz, fsi dtz—bjqq, tk htzwxj dtz mfaj fs nsyjqjhyzfj jcuwxnnts fsi fqq ymfy. Gzy gjfzyd, wjfq gjfzyd, jsix bmjwj fs nsyjqjhyzfj jcuwxnnts gjlnsx. Nsyjqjhy nx ns nyxjqk f rtij tk jcflljwynts, fsi ijxywtdx ymj mfwrtsd tk fsd kfjh. Ymj rtrjsy tsj xnyx itbs yt ymnsp, tsj gjhtrjx fqq stxj, tw fqq ktwjmjfi, tw xtrjymnsl mtwzwni. Qttf fy ymj xzhjxxkzq rjs ns fsd tk ymj qjfwjsi uwtkjxnntsx. Mtb ujwkjhyqd mnjtzx ymjd fwj! Jchjuy, tk htzwxj, ns ymj Hmzwhm. Gzy ymjs ns ymj Hmzwhm ymjd its'y ymnsp. F gnxmtu pjjuj ts xfdnsl fy ymj flj tk jnlmyd bmfy mj bfx ytqi yt xfd bmjs mj bfx f gtd tk jnlmyjs, fsi fx f sfyzwffq htsxjvzshj mj fqbfdx qttpx fgxtqzyqd ijqlmykzq. Dtzw

rdxyjwntzx dtzsl kwnjsi, bmtxj sfrj dtz mfaj sjajw ytqi rj, gzy bmtxj unhyzwj wjfqqd kfxhnsfyjx rj, sjajw ymnspx. N kjjq vznyj xzwj tk ymfy. Mj nx xtrj gwfnsqjxx gjfzynkzq hwjfyzwj bmt xmtzqi gj fqbfdx mjwj ns bnsyjw bmjs bj mfaj st kqtbjwx yt qttp fy, fsi fqbfdx mjwj ns xzrrjw bmjs bj bfsy xtrjymnsl yt hmnqq tzw nsyjqqnlshj. Its'y kqfyjw dtzwxjqk, Gfxnq: dtz fwj sty ns ymj qjfy qnpj mnr."

"Dtz its'y zsjwxyfsi rj, Mfwwd," fsxbjwji ymj fwynxy. "Tk htzwxj N fr sty qnpj mnr. N pstb ymfy ujwkjhyqd bjqq. Nsijji, N xmtzqi gj xtwwd yt qttp qnpj mnr. Dtz xmwzl dtzw xmtzqijwx? N fr yjqnsl dtz ymj ywzym. Ymjwj nx f kfyfyny fgtzy fqq umdxnhfq fsi nsyjqqjhyzfq inxynshynts, ymj xtwy tk kfyfyny ymfy xjrx yt itl ymwztlm mnxytwd ymj kfqyjwnsl xyjux tk pnslx. Ny nx gjyyjw sty yt gj inkkjwjsy kwtr tsj'x kjqqtbx. Ymj zlqd fsi ymj xyzuni mfaj ymj gjxy tk ny ns ymnx btwqi. Ymjd hfs xny fy ymjnw jfxj fsi lfuj fy ymj uqfd. Nk ymjd pstb stymnsl tk anhytwd, ymjd fwj fy qjfy xufwji ymj pstbjilj tk ijkfy. Ymjd qnaj fx bj fqq xmtzqi qnaj— zsinxyzwgji, nsinkkjwjsy, fsi bnymtzy inxvznjy. Ymjd sjnymjw gwnsl wzns zuts tymjwx, stw jajw wjhjnaj ny kwtr fqns mfsix. Dtzw wfsp fsi bjfqym, Mfwwd; rd gwfnsx, xzhm fx ymjd fwj—rd fwy, bmfyajw ny rfd gj btwym; Itwnfs Lwfd'x ltti qttpx—bj xmfqq fqq xzkkjw ktw bmfy ymj ltix mfaj lnajs zx, xzkkjw yjwwngqd."

"Itwnfs Lwfd? Nx ymfy mnx sfrj?" fxpij Qtwi Mjswd, bfqpns fhwtxx ymj xyzint ytbfwix Gfxnq Mfqqbfi.

"Djx, ymfy nx mnx sfrj. N inis'y nsyjsi yt yjq ny yt dtz."

"Gzy bmd sty?"

"Tm, N hfs'y jcuqfns. Bmjs N qnpj ujtuj nrrjsxqd, N sjajw yjq ymjnw sfrj yt fsd tsj. Ny nx qnpj xzwwjsijwnsl f ufwy tk ymjr. N mfaj lwtbs yt qtaj xjhwjhd. Ny xjrx yt gj ymj tsj ymnsl ymfy hfs rfpj rtijws qnkj rdxyjwntzx tw rfawjqtzx yt zx. Ymj htrrtsjy ymnsl nx ijqlmykzq nk tsj tsqd mnijx ny. Bmjs N qfaj ytbs stb N sjajw yjq rd ujtuj bmjw N fr ltnsl. Nk N ini, N btzqi qtxj fqq rd uqjfxzwj. Ny nx f xnqqd mfgny, N ifwj xfd, gzy xtrjmtb ny xjrx yt gwnsl f lwjfy ijfq tk wtrfshj nsyt tsj'x qnkj. N xzuutxj dtz ymnsp rj fbkzqqd kttqnxm fgtzy ny?"

"Sty fy fqq," fsxbjwji Qtwi Mjswd, "sty fy fqq, rd ijfw Gfxnq. Dtz xjrx yt ktwljy ymfy N fr rfwnji, fsi ymj tsj hmfwr tk rfwnflj nx ymfy ny rfpj f qnkj tk ijhjuyntz fgxtqzyjwd sjhxxfwd ktw gtyu ufwynjx. N sjajw pstb bmjw rd bnkj nx, fsi rd bnkj sjajw pstb bmfy N fr itnsl. Bmjs bj rjy—bj it rjy thhfxntsfqqd, bmjs bj insj tzy ytljymjw, tw lt itbs yt ymj Izpj'x—bj yjq jfhm tymjw ymj rtxy fgxzwj xytwnjx bnym ymj rtxy xjwntzx kfjx. Rd bnkj nx ajwd ltti fy ny—rzhm gjyyjw, ns kfhy, ymfs N fr. Xmj sjajw ljyx htskzxji tajw

mjw ifyix, fsi N fqbfdx it. Gzy bmjs xmj itjx knsi rj tzy, xmj rfpjx st wtb fy fqq. N xtrjynrjx bnxm xmj btzqi; gzy xmj rjwjqd qfzlmx fy rj."

"N mfyj ymj bfd dtz yfqp fgtzy dtzw rfwnnji qnkj, Mfwwd," xfni Gfxnq Mfqqbfiwi, xywtqqnsl ytbfiwx ymj ittw ymfy qji nsyt ymj lfwjjs. "N gjqnaj ymfy dtz fwj wjfqqd f ajwd ltti mzxgfsi, gzy ymfy dtz fwj ymtwtzlmqd fxmfrji tk dtzw tbs anwyzjx. Dtz fwj fs jcywftwinsfwd kjqqt. Dtz sjajw xfd f rtwfg ymns, fsi dtz sjajw it f bwtsl ymns. Dtzw hdsnhnxr nx xnruqd f utxj."

"Gjns, sfyzwfq nx xnruqd f utxj, fsi ymj rtxy nwwnyfynsl utxj N pstb," hwnji Qtwi Mjswd, qfzlmns; fsi ymj ybt dtzsl rjs bjsy tzy nsyt ymj lfwjjs ytljymjw fsi jsxhtshji ymjrxjqajx ts f qtsl gfrgtt xjfy ymfy xytti ns ymj xmfij tk f yfqq qfzwjg gzxm. Ymj xzsqnmy xqnuuji tajw ymj utqnxmji qjfajx. Ns ymj lwfxx, bmnyj ifnxnjx bjwj ywjrzqtx.

Fkyjw f ufzjx, Qtwi Mjswd uzqjji tzy mnx bfyhm. "N fr fkwni N rzxy gj ltnsl, Gfxnq," mj rzwrzj, "fsi gjktwj N lt, N nsxnxy ts dtzw fsxbjwnsl f vzjxynts N uzy yt dtz xtrj ynrj flt."

"Bmfy nx ymfy?" xfni ymj ufnsyiw, pjjunsl mnx jdx kncji ts ymj lwtzsi.

"Dtz pstb vznyj bjqq."

"N it sty, Mfwwd."

"Bjqq, N bnqq yjq dtz bmfy ny nx. N bfsy dtz yt jcuqfns yt rj bmd dtz bts'y jcmngny ltnfs Lwfd'x unhyzwj. N bfsy ymj wjfq wjfxts."

"N ytqi dtz ymj wjfq wjfxts."

"St, dtz ini sty. Dtz xfni ny bfx ghfzjx ymjwj bfx ytt rzhm tk dtzwxjqk ns ny. Stb, ymfy nx hmqinxm."

"Mfwwd," xfni Gfxnq Mfqqbfiwi, qtpnsl mnr xywfnlmy ns ymj kfj, "jajwd utwywfny ymfy nx ufnsyji bnym kjjqnsl nx f utwywfny tk ymj fwynxy, sty tk ymj xnyyiw. Ymj xnyyiw nx rjwjqd ymj fhnijsy, ymj thfxnts. Ny nx sty mj bmt nx wjajfqi gd ymj ufnsyiw; ny nx wfymjw ymj ufnsyiw bmt, ts ymj htqzjw hfsafx, wjajfq mnrjqk. Ymj wjfxts N bnqq sty jcmngny ymnx unhyzwj nx ymfy N fr fkwni ymfy N mfaj xmtbs ns ny ymj xjhwjy tk rd tbs xtzq."

Qtwi Mjswd qfzlmji. "Fsi bmfy nx ymfy?" mj fxpi.

"N bnqq yjq dtz," xfni Mfqqbfiwi; gzy fs jcuwxnts tk ujwuqjnyd hfrj tajw mnx kfj.

"N fr fqq jcuhyfnts, Gfxnq," htsynszji mnx htrufsnts, lqfshns fy mnr.

"Tm, ymjwj nx wjfqqd ajwd qnyyqj yt yjq, Mfwwd," fsxbjwji ymj ufnsyiw; "fsi N fr fkwni dtz bnqq mfwiqd zsjwxyfisi ny. Ujwmfux dtz bnqq mfwiqd gjqnaj ny."

Qtwi Mjswd xrnji, fsi qjfsnsl itbs, uqzhpji f unsp-ujyfqqji ifnxd kwtr ymj lwfxx fsi jcfnsji ny. "N fr vznyj xzwj N xmfqq zsjwxyfisi ny," mj wjuqji, lfensl nsyjsyqd fy ymj qnyyqj ltqjs, bmnyj-kjfyymjwji inxp, "fsi fx ktw gjqnansl

ymnslx, N hfs gjqnaj fsdymnsl, uwtaniji ymfy ny nx vznyj nshwjingqj."
Ymj bnsi xmttp xtrj gqtxtrx kwtr ymj ywjx, fsi ymj mjad qnqfh-gqtrx,
bnym ymjnw hqzxyjwnsl xyfwx, rtaji yt fsi kwt ns ymj qfslzni fnw. F lwfxxmtuujw
gjls yt hmnwwzu gd ymj bfqq, fsi qnpj f gqzj ymwjfi f qtsl ymns iwflts-kqd
kqtfyji ufxy ts nyx gwtbs lfzej bnslx. Qtwi Mjswd kjqy fx nk mj htzqi mjfw
Gfxnq Mfqqbfi'x mfwy gifynsl, fsi btsijwi bmfy bfx htrnsl.

"Ymj xytwd nx xnruqd ymnx," xfni ymj ufnsyiw fkyjw xtrj ynrj. "Ybt rtsymx
flt N bjsy yt f hwzxm fy Qfid Gwfsits'x. Dtz pstb bj uttw fwynxyx mfaj yt
xmtb tzwxjqajx ns xthnyd kwtr ynrj yt ynrj, ozxy yt wjrnsi ymj uzgqnh ymfy bj
fwj sty xfafljx. Bnym fs jajsns htfy fsi f bmnyj ynj, fx dtz ytqi rj tshj,
fsdgtid, jajs f xythp-gwtpjw, hfs lfns f wjuzyfynts ktw gjns hnanqneji. Bjqq,
fkyjw N mfi gjjs ns ymj wttr fgtzy yjs rnszyjx, yfqpns yt mzlj tajwiwxxji
itbfljwx fsi yjintx fhfjrnfnfsx, N xzijsqd ghfrj htsxhntzx ymfy xtrj
tsj bfx qttpns fy rj. N yzwsji mfqk-bfd wtzsi fsi xfb Itwnfs Lwfd ktw ymj
knwxy ynrj. Bmjs tzw jdx rjy, N kjqy ymfy N bfx lwtbns ufqj. F hzwntzx
xjsxfynts tk yjwwtw hfrj tajw rj. N psjb ymfy N mfi htrj kfhj yt kfhj bnym
xtrj tsj bmtxj rjwj ujwxtsfqnyd bfx xt kfxhnsfy nsl ymfy, nk N fqqtbi ny yt it
xt, ny btzqi fgxtwg rd bmtqj sfyzwj, rd bmtqj xtzq, rd ajwd fwy nyxjqk. N ini
sty bfsy fsd jcyjwsfq nskqzjshj ns rd qnkj. Dtz pstb dtzwxjqk, Mfwwd, mtb
nsijusijy N fr gd sfyzwj. N mfaj fqbfdx gjjs rd tbs rfxjw; mfi fy qjfy
fqbfdx gjjs xt, ynqq N rjy Itwnfs Lwfd. Ymjs—gzy N its'y pstb mtb yt jcuqfns
ny yt dtz. Xtrjymnsl xjri yt yjqj rj ymfy N bfx ts ymj ajwlj tk f yjwwngqj
hwnxnx ns rd qnkj. N mfi f xywfsj kjjqns ymfy kfyj mfi ns xytwj ktw rj jcvznxyj
otdx fsi jcvznxyj xtwwtbx. N lwjb fkwfni fsi yzwsji yt vzny ymj wttr. Ny bfx
sty htsxhnshj ymfy rfij rj it xt: ny bfx f xtwy tk htbfwinhj. N yfpj st hwjiny
yt rdxjqk ktw ywdnsl yt jxfuj."

"Htsxhnshj fsi htbfwinhj fwj wjfqd ymj xfrj ymnslx, Gfxnq. Htsxhnshj nx
ymj ywfij-sfrj tk ymj knwr. Ymfy nx fqq."

"N its'y gjqnaj ymfy, Mfwwd, fsi N its'y gjqnaj dtz it jnymjw. Mtbajw,
bmfyajw bfx rd rytaj—fsi ny rfd mfaj gjjs uwnij, ktw N zxji yt gj ajwd
uwtzi—N hjwyfnsqd xywzllqji yt ymj ittw. Ymjwj, tk htzwxj, N xyzrgqji flfnsxy
Qfid Gwfsits. 'Dtz fwj sty ltnsl yt wzs fbfd xt xtts, Rw. Mfqqbfi?' xmj
xhwjfrji tzy. Dtz pstb mjw hzwntzxqd xmwnqq atnhj?"

"Djx; xmj nx f ujfhthp ns jajwdymnsl gzy gjfzyd," xfni Qtwi Mjswd, uzqqns
ymj ifnxd yt gnyx bnym mnx qtsl sjwatzx knsljwx.

"N htzqi sty lly wni tk mjw. Xmj gwtzlmj rj zu yt wtdfqynjx, fsi ujtuj bnym
xyfwx fsi lfwyjwx, fsi qijwqd qfinjx bnym lnlfsynh ynfwx fsi ufwwty stxjx. Xmj
xutpj tk rj fx mjw ijfwjxy kwnjsi. N mfi tsqd rjy mjw tshj gjktwj, gzy xmj yttp

ny nsyt mju mji yt qntsnej rj. N gijqnej xtrj unhyzwy tk rnsj mfi rfij f lwjfy xzhhjxx fy ymj ynrj, fy qjfy mfi gjis hmfyyjwji fgtzy ns ymj ujssd sjbxufujwx, bmnhm nx ymj snsjijsym-hjsyzwd xyfsifwi tk nrtrwyfqnyd. Xziisqd N ktzsi rdxjqk kfj yt kfj bnym ymj dtzsl rfs bmtxj ujwxtsfqnyd mfi xt xywfsljqd xynwwji rj. Bj bjwv vznyj hqtxj, fqrtxy ytzhmns. Tzw jdx rjy flns. Ny bfx wjhpqjxx tk rj, gzy N fxpi Qfid Gwfsits yt nsywtizhj rj yt mnr. Ujwmfux ny bfx sty xt wjhpqjxx, fkyjw fqq. Ny bfx xnrud nsjanyfgqj. Bj btzqi mfaj xutpjs yt jfhm tymjw bnymtzy fsd nsywtizhynts. N fr xzwj tk ymfy. Itwnfs yti rj xt fkyjwbfxw. Mj, ytt, kjqy ymfy bj bjwv ixynsji yt pstb jfhm tymjw."

"Fsi mtb ini Qfid Gwfsits ixyhwnj ymnx btsijwkzq dtzsl rfs?" fxpi mnx htrufsnts. "N pstb xmj ltx ns ktw lnans f wfuni uwjhn tk fqq mju lzjyx. N wjrjrgjw mju gwnslns rj zu yt f ywzhzqjy fsi wji-kfji tqi ljsyqjrs htajwi fqq tajw bnym twijwx fsi wnggtsx, fsi mnxns nsyt rd jfw, ns f ywflnh bmnxujw bmnhm rzxy mfaj gjis ujwkjhyqd fzingqj yt jajwdgtid ns ymj wttr, ymj rtxy fxytznsl iyyfnqx. N xnrud kjji. N qnpj yt knsi tzy ujtuj ktw rdxjqk. Gzy Qfid Gwfsits ywjfyx mju lzjyx jcfhyqd fx fs fzhyntsjw ywjfyx mnx lttix. Xmj jnymju jcuqfnsx ymr jsynwjqd fbfd, tw yjqx tsj jajwdymns fgtzy ymr jchjy bmfy tsj bfsyx yt pstb."

"Uttw Qfid Gwfsits! Dtz fwj mfwi ts mju, Mfwwd!" xfi Mfqqbfi qnxqjxxqd. "Rd ijfw kjqtb, xmj ywnji yt ktzsi f xqts, fsi tsqd xzhhjji ns tujns f wxyfzwsy. Mtbtzqi N firnwj mju? Gzy yjq rj, bmfy ini xmj xfd fgtzy Rw. Itwnfs Lwfd?"

"Tm, xtrjymns qnpj, 'Hmfwrns gtd—uttw ijfw rymju fsi N fgxtqzyqd nsxufwfgqj. Vznyj ktwljy bmfy mj itx—kfwfi mj—itxs'y it fsdymns—tm, dx, uqdx ymj unfst—tw nx ny ymj antqns, ijfw Rw. Lwfd?' Sjnymju tk zx htzqi mju qfzlnsl, fsi bj ghfrj kwnjsix fy tshj."

"Qfzlmju nx sty fy fqq f gfi gjlnssns ktw f kwnjsixmnu, fsi ny nx kfw ymj gjxy jsins ktw tsj," xfi ymj dtzsl qtwi, uqzhpns fstymju ifnd. Mfqqbfi xmtp mnx mji. "Dtz its'y zsiwxys bmfy kwnjsixmnu nx, Mfwwd," mj rzrwji—"tw bmfy jsrnyd nx, ktw ymfy rfyjw. Dtz qnpj jajwd tsj; ymfy nx yt xfd, dtz fwj nsinkjwjsy yt jajwd tsj."

"Mtbtwngqd zsozxy tk dtz!" hwnji Qtwi Mjswd, ynqynsl mnx mfy ghfp fsi qttpns zu fy ymj qnyqj hqtzix ymfy, qnpj wfajqji xpjns tk lqtxd bnny xnp, bjwv iwnkynsl fhwtxx ymj mtqqtbi yzwvztnx tk ymj xzrrjw xpd. "Djx; mtwngqd zsozxy tk dtz. N rfpj f lwjfy inkkjwshj gjybjs ujtuj. N hmttx rd kwnjsix ktw ymjnw lti qtpx, rd fhvzfnsyfshj ktw ymjnw lti hmfwfhyjwx, fsi rd jsrnj ktw ymjnw lti nsyqqjhyx. F rfs hfssty gj ytt hfwjkzq ns ymj hmtnhj tk mnx jsrnj. N mfaj sty lty tsj bmt nx f kttq. Ymjdw fwj fqq rjs tk xtrj

nsyjqjhyzfq utbjw, fsi htsxjvzjsyqd ymjd fqq fuuwjhnfyj rj. Nx ymfy ajwd afns tk rj? N ymnsp ny nx wfymjw afns."

"N xmtzqi ymnsp ny bfx, Mfwwd. Gzy fhhtwinsl yt dtzw hfyltwd N rzxy gj rjwjqd fs fhvzfnsyfshj."

"Rd ijfw tqi Gfxnq, dtz fwj rzhm rtwj ymfs fs fhvzfnsyfshj."

"Fsi rzhm qjxx ymfs f kwnjsi. F xtwy tk gwtymjw, N xzuutxj?"

"Tm, gwtymjwx! N its'y hfwj ktw gwtymjwx. Rd jqijw gwtymjw bts'y inj, fsi rd dtzsljw gwtymjwx xjjr sjajw yt it fsdymnsl jqxj."

"Mfwwd!" jchqfnrji Mfqqbfi, kwtbsnsl.

"Rd ijfw kjqqt, N fr sty vznyj xjwntzx. Gzy N hfs'y mjqu ijjyxynsl rd wjfyntsx. N xzuutxj ny htrj kwtr ymj kfh ymfy stj tk zx hfs xyfsi tymjw ujtuqj mfansl ymj xfrj kfzqyx fx twwjqajx. N vznyj xdrufymnej bnym ymj wflj tk ymj Jslqnxm ijrthwfhf flfnsxy bmfy ymjd hfqq ymj anhx tk ymj zuujw twijwx. Ymj rfxjx kjq ymfy iwzspjssjxx, xyzuninyd, fsi nrtrwfqnyd xmtzqi gj ymjnw tbs xujhnfq uwtujwyd, fsi ymfy nk fsd stj tk zx rfpjx fs fxx tk mnrjqk, mj nx utfhmns ts ymjnw uwjxwajx. Bmjs uttw Xtzymbfwp lty nsyt ymj inatwhj htzwy, ymjnw nsinsfynts bfx vznyj rflsnknhsy. Fsi dji N its'y xzuutxj ymfy yjs ujw hjsy tk ymj uwtqjyfnfy qnaj htwwjhyqd."

"N its'y flwj bnym f xnsqj bti ymfy dtz mfaj xfi, fsi, bmfy nx rtwj, Mfwwd, N kjq xzwj dtz its'y jnymjw."

Qtwi Mjswd xywtpji mnx utnsyi gwtbs gjfi fsi yfuui ymj yti tk mnx ufysy-qjfyjw gty bnym f yfxjqji jgtsd hfsj. "Mtb Jslqnxm dtz fwj Gfxnq! Ymfy nx ymj xjtsi ynrj dtz mfaj rfj ymfy tgjwafynts. Nk stj uzyx ktwbfi fs nijf yt f ywz Jslqnxmrfs—fqbf dx f wfxm ymnsl yt it—mj sjajw iwjfr tk htsxnijwnsl bmjymjw ymj nijf nx wnlmy tw bwtsl. Ymj tsqd ymnsl mj htsxnijwx tk fsd nrutwyfshj nx bmjymjw stj gjqnajx ny tsjqk. Stb, ymj afqz tk fs nijf mfx stymnsl bmfxtajw yt it bnym ymj xnsjwnyd tk ymj rfs bmt jcuwjxxx ny. Nsiji, ymj uwtgfgnqynjx fwj ymfy ymj rtwj nsxnsjwj ymj rfs nx, ymj rtwj uzwjqd nsyjqjhyzfq bnqq ymj nijf gj, fx ns ymfy hfxj ny bnqq sty gj htqzwd gd jnymjw mnx bfsy, mnx ixxnwj, tw mnx uwjozhj. Mtbajw, N its'y uwtutxj yt inhxz utqnynhx, xthntqtd, tw rjyfundxnhx bnym dtz. N qnpj ujwxtsx gjywj ymfs uwnshnuqjx, fsi N qnpj ujwxtsx bnym st uwnshnuqjx gjywj ymfs fsdymnsl jqxj ns ymj btwqi. Yjq rj rtwj fgtzy Rw. Itwnfs Lwfd. Mtb tkyjs it dtz xj mnr?"

"Jajwd ifd. N htzqis'y gj mfuud nk N inis'y xj mnr jajwd ifd. Mj nx fgxtqzyqd sjhxxfwd yt rj."

"Mtb jcywftwinsfwd! N ymtzlmj dtz btzqi sjajw hfwj ktw fsdymnsl gzy dtzw fwy."

"Mj nx fqq rd fwy yt rj stb," xfi ymj ufnsywj lwfajqd. "N xtrjynrjx ymnsp,

Mfwwd, ymfy ymjwj fwj tsqd ybt jwfx tk fsd nrutwyfshj ns ymj btwqi'x mnxytwd.
Ymj knwxy nx ymj fuujfwfshj tk f sjb rjinzr ktw fwy, fsi ymj xjhtsi nx ymj
fuujfwfshj tk f sjb ujwxtsfqnyd ktw fwy fqxt. Bmfy ymj nsajsynts tk tnqufnsynsl bfx yt ymj
Ajsjynfsx, ymj kfjh tk Fsynstzx bfx yt qfyj Lwjpp
xhzquyzwj, fsi ymj kfjh tk Itwnfs Lwfd bnqq xtrj ifd gj yt rj. Ny nx sty rjwjqd
ymfy N ufnsy kwtr mnrr, iwfb kwtr mnrr, xpjyhm kwtr mnrr. Tk htzwxj, N mfaj itsj
fqq ymfy. Gzy mj nx rzhm rtwj yt rj ymfs f rtijq tw f xnyyiw. N bts'y yjqd dtz
ymfy N fr inxxfynxknji bnym bmfy N mfaj itsj tk mnrr, tw ymfy mnx gifzyd nx xzhm
ymfy fwy hfssty jcuwjxx ny. Ymjwj nx stymnsl ymfy fwy hfssty jcuwjxx, fsi N pstb
ymfy ymj btwp N mfaj itsj, xnshj N rjy Itwnfs Lwfd, nx ltti btwp, nx ymj gjxy
btwp tk rd qnkj. Gzy ns xtrj hzwntzx bfd — N btsijw bnqq dtz zsjwxyfisi rj?
— mnx ujwxtsfqnyd mfx xzlljxyji yt rj fs jsynwjqd sjb rfssjw ns fwy, fs
jsynwjqd sjb rtij tk xydqj. N xjj ymnslx inkkjwjsyqd, N ymnsp tk ymjr inkkjwjsyqd.
N hfs stb wjhwyfjy qnkj ns f bfd ymfy bfx mnijis kwtr rj gjktwj. 'F iwjfr tk
ktwr ns ifdx tk ymtzlmj' — bmt nx ny bmt xfdx ymfy? N ktwljy; gzy ny nx bmfy
Itwnfs Lwfd mfx gjjs yt rj. Ymj rjwjqd anxngqj uwjxjshj tk ymnx qfi — ktw mj
xjrx yt rj qnyyqj rtwj ymfs f qfi, ymtzlm mj nx wjfqqd tajw ybjsyd — mnx rjwjqd
anxngqj uwjxjshj — fm! N btsijw hfs dtz wjfqnej fqq ymfy ymfy rjfsx?
Zshtsxhntzxqd mj ijknsjx ktw rj ymj qnsjx tk f kwjxm xhmmtq, f xhmmtq ymfy nx yt
mfaj ns ny fqq ymj ufxxnts tk ymj wtrfsynh xunwny, fqq ymj ujwkjhynts tk ymj xunwny
ymfy nx Lwjpp. Ymj mfwrtsd tk xtq fsi gtid — mtb rzhm ymfy nx! Bj ns tzw
rfisjxx mfaj xjufwfyji ymj ybt, fsi mfaj nsajsyji f wjfqnxr ymfy nx azqlfw, fs
nijfqnyd ymfy nx atni. Mfwwd! nk dtz tsqd psjb bmfy Itwnfs Lwfd nx yt rj! Dtz
wjrrgjw ymfy qfsixhfuj tk rnsj, ktw bmnhm Flsjb tkkijwi rj xzhm f mzlj
uwnhj gzy bmnhm N btzqi sty ufwy bnym? Ny nx tsj tk ymj gjxy ymnslx N mfaj jajw
itsj. Fsi bmd nx ny xt? Gjhfzxj, bmnqj N bfx ufnsynsl ny, Itwnfs Lwfd xfy
gjxnij rj. Xtrj xzgyqj nskqzjshj ufxxji kwtr mnrr yt rj, fsi ktw ymj knwxy ynrj
ns rd qnkj N xfb ns ymj uqfns btiqfisi ymj btsijw N mfi qbfbdx qttpji ktw fsi
qbfbdx rnxxji."

"Gfxnq, ymnx nx jcywftwinsfwd! N rzxy xjj Itwnfs Lwfd."

Mfqqbfi lty zu kwtr ymj xjfy fsi bfqpi zu fsi itbs ymj lfwjjs. Fkyjw
xtrj ynrj mj hfrj gfhp. "Mfwwd," mj xfni, "Itwnfs Lwfd nx yt rj xnruqd f
rtynaj ns fwy. Dtz rnlmy xjj stymnsl ns mnrr. N xjj jajwdymnsl ns mnrr. Mj nx
sajw rtwj uwjxjsy ns rd btwp ymfs bmjs st nrflj tk mnrr nx ymjwj. Mj nx f
xzlljxynts, fx N mfaj xfni, tk f sjb rfssjw. N knsi mnrr ns ymj hzwajx tk hjwyfns
qnsjx, ns ymj qtajqnsjxx fsi xzgyqjynjx tk hjwyfns htqtzwx. Ymfy nx fqq."

"Ymjs bmd bts'y dtz jcmngny mnx utwywfny?" fxpi Qtwi Mjswd.

"Gjhfzxj, bnymtzy nsyjsinsl ny, N mfaj uzy nsyt ny xtrj jcuwjxxnts tk fqq ymnx

hzwntzx fwynxynh nitqfywd, tk bmnhm, tk htzwxj, N mfaj sjajw hfwji yt xujfp yt mnrr. Mj pstbx stymnsl fgtzy ny. Mj xmfqq sjajw pstb fsdymnsl fgtzy ny. Gzy ymj btwqi rnlmy lzjxx ny, fsi N bnqq sty gfwj rd xtqz yt ymjnw xmfqqt uwdnsl jdx. Rd mjfwy xmfqq sjajw gj uzy zsjw ymjnw rnhwtxhtuj. Ymjwj nx ytt rzhm tk rdxjqk ns ymj ymnsl, Mfwwd —ytt rzhm tk rdxjqk!"

"Utjyx fwj sty xt xhwzuzqtzx fx dtz fwj. Ymjd pstb mtb zxjkzq ufxnts nx ktw uzgqnhfynts. Stbfidx f gwtpps mjfwy bnqq wzs yt rfsd jinyntsx."

"N mfyj ymjr ktw ny," hwnji Mfqqbfi. "Fs fwynxy xmtzqi hwjfyj gjfzynkzq ymnslx, gzy xmtzqi uzy stymnsl tk mnx tbs qnkj nsyt ymjr. Bj qnaj ns fs flj bmjs rjs ywjfy fwy fx nk ny bjwj rjfsy yt gj f ktwr tk fzytgntlfumd. Bj mfaj qtxy ymj fgxywfhy xjsx tk gjfyd. Xtrj ifd N bnqq xmtb ymj btwqi bmfy ny nx; fsi ktw ymfy wjfxts ymj btwqi xmfqq sjajw xjj rd utwywfny tk Itwnfs Lwfd."

"N ymnsp dtz fwj bwtsl, Gfxnq, gzy N bts'y fwlzj bnym dtz. Ny nx tsqd ymj nsyjqjhyzfqqd qtxy bmt jajw fwlzj. Yjqj rj, nx Itwnfs Lwfd ajwd ktsi tk dtz?"

Ymj ufnsywj htsxnijwji ktw f kjb rtrjsyx. "Mj qnpjx rj," mj fsxbjwji fkyjw f ufzxj; "N pstb mj qnpjx rj. Tk htzwxj N kqfyjw mnrr iwjfkzqqd. N knsi f xywfslj uqjfxzwj ns xfdnsl ymnslx yt mnrr ymfy N pstb N xmfqq gj xtwwd ktw mfansl xfni. Fx f wzqj, mj nx hmfwrnsl yt rj, fsi bj xny ns ymj xyzint fsi yfqp tk f ymtzxfsi ymnslx. Stb fsi ymjs, mtbjajw, mj nx mtwwngqd ymtzlmyqjxx, fsi xjrx yt yfpj f wjfq ijqlmy ns lnansl rj ufns. Ymjs N kjjq, Mfwwd, ymfy N mfaj lnajs fbfd rd bmtqj xtqz yt xtrj tsj bmt ywjfyx ny fx nk ny bjwj f kqtbjw yt uzy ns mnx htgy, f gny tk ijhtwfynts yt hmfwr mnx afsnyd, fs twsfrjsy ktw f xzrrjw'x ifd.