Приложение 1

**Last trip.**

The story happened in New York. Max, a taxi driver, was doing his last trip that day. He arrived at the place exactly on time and beeped the horn. Nobody came out of the house. Max waited a couple of minutes and beeped again. He was never late himself and he didn’t like the clients who kept him waiting. He was thinking of driving home, but something made him park the car and check the door.

He came up to the front door and knocked. “Just a minute”, an old weak voice answered. After a long pause a small lady of about ninety opened the door. She was wearing an expensive but old-fashioned dress and a veiled hat. Indeed, she looked like a film star of the forties. She asked Max to help her with the heavy suitcase that was inside. He agreed without hesitation.

He came in and noticed that the room looked like people had never lived there. All the furniture was covered with cloth. There were no statuettes and tea sets on the shelves or an old clock on the wall. In the corner of the room he noticed a large box filled with old photos and books. “A deserted room”, he thought.

They moved slowly to the car and the lady kept thanking Max for his help and being so patient. He said it was his job to treat every passenger like he would treat his mother. “Oh, you are such a good boy!” she said. She took the back seat and named the address. Max understood that she was going to hospital.

She asked Max to drive through the city centre though it involved extra time. She did not mind the distance and the time. She said she was not in a hurry. She told Max her family had left long before and the doctor said that her chances were not good. Her eyes filled with tears.

Max switched off the counter and asked the lady which route she preferred. The next two hours they were driving through the city. She showed Max the building she had worked in and the dance hall she had visited as a little girl. They went to the district she had lived in with her husband after their marriage.

Finally she said she was tired and they drove in silence, directly to the hospital. It was a low building that looked more like a small holiday centre. Two nurses came up quickly to them as if they were waiting. They carefully helped her out of the taxi into the wheelchair. “How much do I owe you?” she said looking at Max. “Nothing”, he answered.

“You need to earn your living”, she added, opening her bag. “There are other passengers”, answered Max. He bent down and embraced the old lady. She hugged in return. “Thank you for the little happiness you gave me”, she whispered. On his way home Max did not switch on the radio. He drove in silence. He had an impression that it was the most important trip of his life.