

# Story with a Sneezed Thought<sup>1</sup>

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A Thought got lost in a parking lot. He suddenly found himself among cars jammed up against each other. The last thing the Thought remembered was how he sat peacefully in Simon's head, while Simon, with a really bad cold, was busily pressing the keys of a computer. The medicine was not helping much, and he was now sneezing all the time. Thus, the Thought was probably thrown out into the world through sneezing. It must have been a strong sneeze because he landed somewhere in a noisy and crowded parking lot.

Scared and confused, Simon's Thought did not know where to go and what to do. He looked around hoping to see something or someone he knew. But everything was strange to him. A completely new world emerged: a jumble of colors, smells, and sounds. There, at "home," he lived in a peaceful chiaroscuro. Here, the light was too bright and the shapes stood out. He was already dizzy from the light, the racket, the smell of gas, the commotion, and the hubbub of cars. Suddenly, from somewhere behind him, he heard a voice:

"Are you looking for a parking space?"

"Excuse me?"

"Would you like to park?"

"I? No. Why should I park?"

"Everyone does. Everyone parks their car here. I only wanted to help... but now I see you have no car. So I guess I cannot help you. I hope you did not come here to keep a space for someone else because this sort of thing does not work with me! Anyway, can I help you?"

"How?"

"What do you mean how? I could find you a parking space. That's what I'm here for. I'm the Angel of the Parking Lots and you are in a parking lot. What else do you expect?"

In the hullabaloo and clamor of cars and honks, Simon's Thought reckoned that he had missed the point.

"You are who?" he asked astonished.

"I'm the Angel of the Parking Lots... or you can call also me the Little Angel of the Parking Lots, the way the girls pamper me. C'mon, leave this place."

The astonished reaction on the side of Simon's Thought was natural. This man who presented himself as the Angel of the Parking Lots did not look like an angel at all. He was a middle-aged man, bald-headed, tall, and very skinny, and he was wearing blue jeans and an ordinary T-shirt. Only his eyes were remarkable: they were green and beautiful.

"But what parking space do I take? Am I really in your way?"

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<sup>1</sup> This text is a preliminary version of the final published manuscript.

“I see you are in a mood of joking. As if you didn’t know how many people wished they had a space to park right this very moment. I cannot assist everyone. Although I’ll admit, I have a soft spot for girls, especially the young ones. I’ve always been a gentleman. My mother taught me to pay special attention to women, because they need protection and help. Here’s one coming... Excuse me,” said the Angel of the Parking Lots walking off in the direction of a red Tico.

Steering a red Tico, a young blonde woman was looking for a place to park. She was driving slowly and pushing down the breaks often. Her car was blocking the way of other cars and there was angry honking from behind her. Unexpectedly, almost miraculously, a man appeared in front of her, unlocked his car, and drove away, leaving the blonde a place to park. A little later, the Angel of the Parking Lots returned to Simon’s Thought and resumed their conversation.

“So, what’s this all about?”

“Well, I told you I don’t need a place to park... because I don’t have a car.”

“Then why are you here? No one is allowed here without a car. It doesn’t make sense to be in this place without driving a car.”

“To be honest, I don’t know why I’m here. I was quite happy at home when Simon sneezed and...”

“And...?”

“And I found myself here. Outside.”

“I don’t understand what you are saying and I don’t have the time to listen. Look around you at this chaos. We’re a country of drivers without parking spaces. I’m asking you to leave this place now.”

“Wait a minute, do I really take up space? If Simon were here, I’d understand, he’d use up a space, but as it is... how much space can a child’s thought fill ... in his head there were hundreds... or thousands of us.”

“In whose head? Do you think I have time to joke? Please, find another place to stop.”

“I don’t have time to joke either. I must return home and I have no idea where I am and how to get there.”

The Angel of the Parking Lots was listening and watching him bewildered. But Simon’s Thought was not less surprised looking at the Angel of the Parking Lots. This man encountered a range of people daily. They all seemed weird to him, and under the stress of driving they looked even more bizarre. They swore often, forgot all good manners, their eyes bulged out, they banged doors, bribed anyone they could, and seemed even ready to kill – all of these for the sake of a parking place. Behaving as drivers, their physiognomy also changed: their wrinkles deepened, their expressions hardened, and their eyes flared strangely. But now, the person he was staring at and speaking to looked even more unusual. In fact, he could not even say this was a “person” – he certainly spoke like a person and he could see him. But was he a human being? He looked more like a shadow. The Angel of the Parking Lots could hardly see him.

*I have asked many people how a Thought looks like and I have received all kinds of answers. I was told that it resembles:*

*“people jostling each other in a bazaar”*  
*“the perpetual motion of the waves of the sea”*  
*“a blotch of ink”*  
*“a comet”*  
*“a cloud”*  
*“a rainbow”*  
*“an image”*  
*“a sound”*  
*“a smell”*  
*“an idea”*  
*“a feeling”*

*What do you think? What does a thought look like?*

“Sir, or whatever you are, what is your name? Do you have an ID or anything that could prove who you are?”

“What name can I have? I’m only a thought.”

“OK, but still, you must have a name. There at Simon’s, or in Simon’s head, among other thoughts, how do you address one another?”

“We don’t do it. People have their own thoughts and each thought minds his own business, without getting in another thought’s way. There are kind thoughts and evil thoughts, merry thoughts and sad thoughts, some are intelligent and others are less smart. Together they make up who Simon is. We inhabit Simon’s head and take care of ourselves. When we have something to say, we address Simon directly.”

“Here, things are different. Actually, my name is Ionel. It’s in my birth certificate. But working in the parking business more and more ladies called me their guardian angel, and in time people started calling me by this nickname. One day they called me The Angel of the Parking Lots and I’ve had this name ever since. Nobody remembers Ionel anymore. Honestly, I really think I’m the angel of those who park here. I’ve been in this business for many years. I gave my children the names of Little Tico, Mercedes, Seatis, Dubița, Little Volvo... They’re daddy’s kids and I spent my whole life among cars. They have names, I speak to them, we understand each other. But I can hardly understand you. I don’t know who you are or what you are, I don’t know what to call you, you are taking up a parking space unnecessarily, and you are wasting my time. I should be helping someone control his temper.”

“If you really want me to have a name, I’ll gladly have the name of a car... you choose. I know a few brands because Simon is a champion at cars. Toyota, Peugeot, Lamborghini... call me what you want. Dacia? Daciana?”

“It doesn’t work because you are not my child. And besides, it’s none of my business that you don’t have a name. Sir, or Madam, Miss, please, make room for someone who is driving a car. I cannot help you. I do not understand what you are saying. Maybe it’s because I didn’t go to school... whatever... I don’t know... Anyway, I’m extremely busy. I thought something was strange from the moment I saw you, but I’ve seen so many things in life... stress can change people so greatly that nothing surprises me anymore.

I'm very sorry, but I don't have **parking spaces for thoughts**. This would be quite something, as if I didn't have enough trouble.

*Betina and Madeline, 2 twelve-year old girls from France, are convinced that this is the way thoughts look like:*

The Angel of the Parking Lots left in a hurry to handle a traffic jam. He worked diligently and made another parking space available. He was helping the ladies. First, the blondes, the younger ones, then the ones who had a beginner driver's sign on their car, and then the rest of the drivers. After a few minutes of work he came back to his booth from where he was supervising the parking lot and where Simon's Thought was hanging out. This one had a new name to propose.

"Call me Thought the Kind, like Stephan the Great, Mircea the Elder. Does it work?"

"Yes it does. As you wish. But you're still here. Why don't you understand that I'm very busy? Here, action is everything, thinking is not needed. I must act fast, help the angry crowd, and ease the traffic jam. I cannot help you. Try somewhere else."

"Where do you suggest I may go? And most importantly, how should I leave? I don't travel by myself. When Simon moves, I move. When Simon stops, I stop. I have no clue how to move around..."

"But then, how did you get here? Why do they say that thoughts can fly? Don't you fly?"

"Didn't I already say... I think that Simon sneezed me out. He's had a really bad cold. One time he sneezed really hard and I must have flown right here. But I've never attempted to fly by myself. I'm not independent. The fact that I'm here is clear, but how I got here is very confusing. Maybe I just flew, but I don't know how I did it."

"Listen, Mr. Thought the Kind, or whatever you're called. You cannot stand here because you block the traffic and you take up a parking space, too. Why is it so difficult to understand? I'm the Angel of the Parking Lots, not the Angel of Thoughts. I help drivers, not thoughts. I'm sorry for what has happened to you, but this is not my specialty. The only way to help you is to find you a parking spot. Everything else is not my business. Maybe there's an Angel of Thoughts somewhere. There must be one. Try to find him and just as I help people find a parking spot maybe he can help you find Simon. You're probably not the only lost thought in the world!"

Thought the Kind was listening closely. This sounded like a solution – to find the Angel of Lost Thoughts! But how? Where? He started shivering. It was cold.

"I'm sorry to bother you. But I hardly know what to do. And I'm also very cold. Please, please help me."

Although he was upset, the Angel of the Parking Lots had a heart of gold. He could see that Thought the Kind was in need and that is why he let him stand there until the end of his shift. Moreover, he closed off the parking space with a sign that said "Reserved Parking," and he kept the door of his booth open so that the heat of the electric radiator could spread to Thought the Kind. He continued his work. That day he helped twenty-four women park their cars. Unfortunately, in spite of all his efforts and tricks, there were three women he could not assist. He managed to clear some parking space with incredible skill, but it was useless. The cars could not fit. He assisted men as well, but he asked

them to park in the most difficult situations. He was exhausted after a long day of work, and he found Thought the Kind not an inch away from where he had left him earlier. He watched him intently. What if someone asked him what Thought the Kind looked like? He was hardly able to describe him. Was he like a shadow of a man?

*Mihaela, a forty-year old architect, imagines thoughts like this:*

*Draw a thought of yours here:*

Is this really a thought? What does a thought look like? It can be anything and anyone. His workday was over. Getting ready to leave, he turned toward Simon's Thought. "Are you warmed up? Are you rested? I'm done for today, I'm leaving. Can I be of any further help to you?"

Simon's Thought was silent, deep in thought. He was not looking too good. He appeared paler than in the morning. He was looking scared at the Angel of the Parking Lots.

"Oh no, please, don't leave me here. Please. Night is coming. It's creepy. I'll freeze..."

"But what can I do? How can I help you? ... I help drivers park their cars. That's my job. I've explained that as clear as the day. Other people's job is to sell goods, teach kids in school, talk on the radio, or make nails... each one of us has different skills. I told you, there must be an Angel for you as well. Where does Simon live?"

"In a house."

"Of course he lives in a house, do you think I'm stupid? But tell me where, on which street? What part of the town? What is his zip code? What number can we call?"

"I don't know. He lives in a nice apartment. We take the elevator. He even has a home cinema. He has many pots with flowers at his windows, but Simon always forgets to water them. There's also a dog, which is very loud – Cara is her name, a Havana Bichon. She barks all the time, loves crackers, and is very lively."

"This kind of information is useless. Do you at least know if there's a telephone in the house?"

"Yes, there's a mobile phone that opens up, and there's another one on the corridor, a cordless one. It wakes up all of us with a loud ring in the morning, at the same hour. This one is gray like the metal."

"No, no, no. I'm asking for a telephone number – the one with ten digits. You dial a few numbers... and then it rings."

"I have no idea."

"Then how can I help you? Maybe I could take you to the police station and tell them you're lost... but they'll think I'm crazy to come with a lost Thought. And how should I take you there? You cannot walk. How should I carry you? Try to fly. Maybe you can do it. I've always imagined that thoughts can fly, even at high speed. But how about you ask someone for a ride, go somewhere, wherever... Sooner or later, who knows, maybe you'll get where you want, to Simon's place. Or you enter someone else's mind... Since you exited Simon's head, you should be able to go into anyone's head. But please, not mine, I've got enough on my head."

*Vlad's thought at age 6.*

## The Flight

The Angel of the Parking Lots left with a heavy heart. Thought the Kind remained alone in a parking lot in disarray, where cars honked and confused drivers searched for a parking space, without anyone to give them directions. Walking home, he was thinking: “What could I’ve done? I’ve my own thoughts and they’re more than enough. I’ve children – enough of them, too. Tomorrow is going to be a busy day.” He had heard that some of the main city roads were going to be under construction the next day, and he was expecting even more cars in his area. He needed a good night’s sleep. In spite of all this reasoning, his heart was heavy. Often, he gave beggars a penny or a piece of bread to the stray dogs that chased him. He was a caring person. He was sad, for he had left behind the lost Thought of a child. He was a poor man, had his own concerns, and he could do nothing.

He was still fretting when he got home. He could not find his peace. Eventually, his kind heart won, and he returned to the parking lot to see if Thought the Kind was still there. He found him almost frozen. He looked smaller and more translucent. Then the Angel of the Parking Lots went to his booth, where he called the Police on his service phone. To be sure they were coming, he lied and said that some vagabonds were threatening him, and he asked for a police team. Two minutes later a police car arrived with two officers. One of them, a short and stout man, approached the place where Thought the Kind was standing. First he could not distinguish anything. But taking off his glasses he saw something dim in the direction in which the Angel of the Parking Lots was pointing.

“What is your name?” asked the policeman.

“Thought the Kind,” a faint voice answered.

“Date of birth?”

... silence. Thought the Kind glanced questioningly toward the Angel of the Parking Lots who nodded.

“I have no idea.”

“Your address, please.”

Again silence.

“Where do you live?”

“At Simon’s.”

“Where is that?”

“In his head.”

### *A reader’s likely thought*

*How many thoughts did you have today? And yesterday?*

The policeman was angry.

“I see you are in a joking mood.” He turned toward the Angel of the Parking Lots and asked him:

“Are you the person who called?”

“Yes, Sir. I really think this is a special case. It seems funny. But maybe this really *is* a lost thought... I don't know how to help him. I help people park their cars. I'm not good at anything else.”

The officer was astonished and stared questioningly at both of them. Then he addressed Thought the Kind in a harsh voice.

“Do you know who you are talking to? We are from the police not from the circus... Have you ever heard of policemen?”

“Yes,” said Thought the Kind in a small voice. I've heard all kinds of weird things about you. I've always asked myself if they were true... for instance, if it's true that policemen carry water in the trunk of their cars in order to keep the siren alive? Or is it true that they don't put their hands in their pockets even when they're cold, because they have their gloves in there... or if they see a sign on a shop door that says “pull,” they're going to pull the trigger...”

The Angel of the Parking Lots panicked when he heard such terrible things, and he tried to mend the situation.

“Please, Sir, don't get upset. I mentioned on the phone that something wasn't normal... please, try to understand... he does not know that such things are not said to a policeman. You know, even more bizarre is the fact that except you and me not many people can see him... so far, no one else has been able to see him.”

Still offended, the officer thought for a moment and then he decided what to do next.

“We're going to proceed as follows: You write a declaration for which you take full responsibility and then we'll see what to do next.”

He gave Thought the Kind a sheet of paper and a pen. The Thought began to write. From a distance, you could imagine that a suspended pen was writing all by itself. He had no difficulty to write, because Simon had always had good grades in Romanian, and had learned to write declarations and petitions. He remembered to put the date on the right side of the page and start with I, the undersigned...

### Declaration

I, the undersigned, Thought the Kind, declare with full responsibility that I am the lost thought of Simon, a boy with blonde hair and green eyes, with a scar on his neck from wart removed surgically, with a really bad cold, who lives in an apartment with beds, chairs, wardrobes, bed lamps, laptop, and telephones, in a block of flats with an elevator. At one point, Simon sneezed and... he had other colds previously, even worse ones, with high fever and shivers, but this has never happened before. He was feeling weak, could not focus, was lying in bed, and sneezing in his handkerchief... but he has never lost his thoughts because of a miserable cold before.

(As he was writing, Thought the Kind was wondering: “How many thoughts has he lost... and which ones... I fear that poor Simon sneezed out all the kind thoughts and was

left with the wicked ones... because there were some of these as well. Sometimes he was thinking to lie or to fight with a classmate who called him names... but I and the rest of his kind thoughts were always nearby and he quickly forgot those undesirable thoughts. My God, now I'm really worried. If Simon sneezed out more kind thoughts, he may act irresponsibly.”)

I would like to return home and I ask for your help.

Sincerely yours,  
Simon's Thought the Kind

August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008

He signed the declaration and handed it to the officer who looked satisfied. He was returning to the police station to submit the petition. Were a solution to be found, an officer was going to contact the Angel of the Parking Lots. The officers left, and the two were once again alone in the parking lot. Thought the Kind was still a lost thought, and the Angel of the Parking Lots was cudgeling his brains over how to help him.

The Angel of the Parking Lots decided to try to help him fly. He encouraged him in all sorts of ways to lift himself up in the air, but Thought the Kind was too scared. He had never done such a thing before, at least, not deliberately. He had no idea how to fly. Then, the Angel of the Parking Lots started to blow hard in his direction, puffing and huffing harder than ever, and hoping he could make Thought the Kind take off. Nothing happened. Thought the Kind was swaying in the gust of air, but he did not budge one inch. The Angel of the Parking Lots tried something else. He brought Thought the Kind in front of an exhaust pipe, thinking that the strong burnt gases would blow him up into the air. When the Angel turned on the engine, Thought the Kind became Thought the Black – he was enveloped in smoke, which made him cough, but did not make him move.

The Angel of the Parking Lots was out of ideas. He regretted that he did not have a more solid education. He thought that if he was more learned, he would have a better plan how to help his friend. Fretting over the situation and his lack of ingenuity, he suddenly heard deafening music from inside a car whose driver started the engine and was pulling out of a parking space. Miraculously, Thought the Kind moved swiftly in the direction of the sound. It was a short and funny sort of flight.

“Bravo... bravo, I knew you could do it... thoughts *can* fly. You've succeeded!” the Angel of the Parking Lots exclaimed cheerfully.

Thought the Kind felt dizzy from his fall, but he was happy. After many attempts, he realized he could hang on people's words or cling to various sounds of music, horns, the beep of a remote control, the rustle of the leaves of a tree. At first, he held on and flew without a direction – from one word or sound to another... aimlessly... with no control, for a short distance. He felt tired easily. Shortly after that, with some training and a lot more focus and determination, Thought the Kind managed to fly longer distances, and his flights were now graceful and deliberate.



He was drifting like a leaf in a breeze. Thought the Kind was now flying over the city, the country, the world, hanging on words, sounds, howls, whispers, and sirens... He felt great. Compared to the narrow space in Simon's head in which he had lived before, or the jam-packed parking lot, he was now floating over a boundless world. This was a vast world that until then had remained unknown to him. He could name the things he saw – those were the people, the trees, the garbage disposal, the dogs, the cars, the shops, the rivers, everything seemed familiar, and yet he had never seen this world with his own eyes before.

### *A reader's likely thought*

*Can thoughts see and speak?*

He could travel now and see the world he once experienced in Simon's mind. The world was greater, more dazzling, noisier, and wilder than he thought. There were all kinds of people, things, and smells. No matter how far he journeyed, Thought the Kind returned to the Angel of the Parking Lots to recount each of his adventures in greatest detail. This is how I learned about his stories, and now I am passing them on to you.

The fact that he could return to the parking lot where his friend, the Angel of the Parking Lots, worked so assiduously, gave him a sense of safety, and gradually he set out on longer trips. He started having some bizarre adventures. I will recount only some of them here. The rest you will have to imagine. I will further give you a few details. He entered the boys' or the men's heads, but he could never access the minds of the girls or the women. It seems that men and women think differently and their thoughts are very dissimilar. Sometimes his arrivals triggered headaches – it was a sign that he should not linger there for a long time, because he was not welcome. He was so unlike any of the thoughts living in that head. He felt at ease in children's heads. He was, after all, a child's Kind Thought. When he stayed in the heads of the grownups, he made them behave briefly like kids – they were happier, more relaxed, laughing more often and without a particular reason, and they no longer took things so seriously. He learned a lot from his travels among the grownups and even more from the elderly, who had many wise thoughts having lived longer.

### **In the storm of thoughts**

At one time, Thought the Kind clutched a word a person uttered, and was heedlessly thrust into an air hole, being jerked in all directions. He felt like inside a washing machine, jiggled and jostled in all sorts of ways. He was tossed up and down, jogged, and spun around, and there seemed no way out of it. He assumed this was the end, as if stuck in a merry-go-round of death.

Giddy and frightened, he tried holding on to something, but there was nothing to grip. With joy and relief he caught sight of other thoughts that were twisted and twirled at the same speed... He could not tell how long this lasted, but all of a sudden he heard a voice, "The session is over. It is time for a break."

Shortly the atmosphere was quiet. The storm calmed down and exhausted Thought the Kind landed on the back of a chair. He caught his breath and a few moments later he realized where he was. He was in a hall with a lot of people who were snacking on cookies and having some coffee. They were talking about politics, their children, and where they spent their vacation.

“What was this?” Thought the Kind asked another Thought, who was catching his breath on the back of the next chair.

“**Brainstorming.** It’s in their program. Whoever invented this sort of thing must be punished. They let loose a cyclone of thoughts to come up with one new idea that could solve a situation. But what is the price for it? Does no one think about us? Besides, we’re the ones who have the ideas. What exceptional ideas do they expect from us when they treat us in this manner? I thought I was going to die. I feel sick from so much yanking and whirling... what original ideas could we produce like this?”

“I’ve never heard of such a thing,” said Thought the Kind.

“You’re so lucky. I guess your master does not do such things. He’s probably not a manager, a social scientist, or a politician. They meet frequently, discuss a theme, and everyone says their opinion. They want to be noticed and look the smartest, so they go bananas, and they think about the same things at the same time. That’s how this storm happens. It’s a jumble of nonsense thoughts that race only to be written down by the moderator of the session on the board over there. There have been situations in which some thoughts have gone to the dogs. They were simply trampled over or they fainted because of all the jostling and shoving.”

“Oh my, this is awful. I never knew it could be so dangerous to think too much all of a sudden.”

“Hey, by the way, what’s your business here? I’ve not seen you at other meetings.”

“I’m Simon’s Thought. Simon is seven years old. He does not beat his brains out – surely, not this way. Right now he’s sick as a dog, sneezing. I think he must have sneezed me out. I don’t know how else I could have arrived here.”

“Watch out when your Simon decides what to be when he grows up. Maybe he’ll want to be a doorman, a driver, or a wall painter... There are many good jobs that don’t take you on such rides... Beware, I see you kind of frail.”

Meanwhile, there was quiet in the conference room. Everyone had finished their coffee and they were now sitting at a round table. Someone was using an overhead projector. They were talking in Romanian, but Thought the Kind did not understand a word. They were saying “the need for good methods,” or... “the need to implement strategies,” or “according to the feasibility study and...” Above the room there was an incredible racket ... a hubbub. He heard fragments of thoughts. “I can’t” ... “How boring” ... “I have to remember to pick up Radu from tennis” ... “What should I buy Geta” ... “Mioara looks so old ... she was such a splendid-looking woman” ... “What time is it?”

Thought the Kind realized that the storm of thoughts was over and now everyone was getting bored. They seemed interested in the graphics on the screen, but in fact they were thinking of something else. At least it was quiet and peaceful.

All of a sudden a gust of wind pushed the door open, and a few voices were heard from beyond the room. They were pretty loud, and Thought the Kind lifted himself up on two words. He heard “Let’s go” and he was out of the conference room, relieved he had survived the unpleasant storm of ideas. With a few leaps, he was back at his new home, the parking lot.

### **A voyage abroad**

On another sunny day, passing through sounds and word of mouth, Thought the Kind landed in the head of an Englishman. He immediately realized something was wrong. He was a Romanian thought in a head full of English thoughts. He recognized the language because Simon was pretty good at English.

The English thoughts, which belonged to a man who was the same age as Simon’s dad, welcomed Thought the Kind. Although they were speaking different languages, the thoughts understood each other. The hosts were really nice. They spoke exactly like in Simon’s books:

“How are you? Where are you from?” asked one of the English thoughts.

“I am from Romania. From Simon from Romania.”

“Romania... Here is Peter from England.”

“England... How on earth did I get here,” thought Thought the Kind. He had crossed the ocean. He was scared. He had probably attached himself to one of the songs heard on the radio, most of them in English, and crossed the border. Good thing he didn’t go to America... But now he was sure he could fly far and fast.

For as long as Thought the Kind stayed in England, the English thoughts asked him how people thought in Romania, what kind of thoughts a boy of Simon’s age had, and how Hagi the football player was doing. Further, Thought the Kind heard the latest news about the Queen and her family, Beckham or Coldplay – Simon’s favorite band. He learned a lot about teas, driving on the right side of the road, and the British metric system.

Thought the Kind had a wonderful time among the foreign thoughts. He had been welcomed so generously and had adjusted to a foreign head so fast, that he now realized how similar the thoughts were everywhere around the world, no matter what country they came from. They could understand one another so well. He was convinced that he was now able to communicate to other thoughts as well – French, Bulgarian, and Chinese thoughts – even if he did not speak these languages.

Soon he felt a sudden longing for his country and the Romanian thoughts, and he started humming a melody by Nicu Alifantis that he knew from Simon. Thinking about Romania, he returned home.

*A reader’s likely thought*

*At border checkpoints, people are inspected for weapons or dangerous chemical substances, but no one checks what kind of thoughts they transport. A person can cross the border with the most dreadful thoughts and no one asks any questions! Why don't thoughts need a passport or an ID to cross the border?*

### **Difficult moments: manipulated, kidnapped, memorized**

Thought the Kind also experienced less pleasant moments. In his various travels he met some mean people. Once, clinging to the sound of a remote control, he landed in the head of a young man who worked for an advertising firm. Do you know what this guy was doing? His job was to persuade as many people he could to buy a certain mobile phone, a certain brand of shampoo, and a certain kind of beverage. Regardless of the quality of these products, this guy was paid to advertise for them in order to increase the sales. The telephone he was now advertising for was identical to the one that broke the day after Simon's parents had bought it for their son. Thought the Kind was outraged that someone could say such wonderful things about products of such poor quality. He tried in vain to make himself heard in this guy's head. The young man did not own the telephone he was advertising for. The only thing he cared for was the money. He thought one way but acted another way. He was surely persuasive, and he seemed to earn a lot of money. He wrote all kinds of lies about the telephone: that it never breaks down, or that the girls are fascinated by the men who use this phone. He shot a TV ad, the sales went up, and he made a fortune.

Thought the Kind noticed how unsuspecting people were and how easily they could be persuaded to act in one way or another. He was ashamed of the thoughts produced by those working in the advertising business. These were thoughts that manipulated people, and Thought the Kind did not have the slightest desire to remain among them, because he totally disagreed with what was happening there. Annoyed, he took off with the first blow of a policeman's whistle, and he soon returned to the Angel of the Parking Lots, whom he told everything about the manipulation of people through advertising.

*How do you distinguish a Kind Thought from a Wicked Thought? Draw:*

*A kind thought*

*A wicked thought*

One day Thought the Kind was kidnapped. He hardly had the time to attach himself to anything when someone grabbed him and forced him into the head of a fat man with a small forehead. There he encountered a jumble and a clutter of thoughts. This guy plagiarized: he stole other people's original ideas and thoughts and pretended they were his. He used other people's ideas to write books, pilfered information from other heads to write articles, and proposed inventions that were not his. He could read other people's ideas, but most of the time he was actually stealing other people's thoughts. He was an indiscriminate thief. Luckily, Thought the Kind was only the thought of a seven-year-old,

and this guy was not interested in him. He soon discarded him and Thought the Kind was happy to leave.

It was not easier to be in the head of a person who had an elephant's memory. This was an old man who remembered absolutely everything. He had not forgotten anything in his entire life. He was phenomenal. He could answer any question about history, geography, or philosophy. This was detrimental to Thought the Kind, who was memorized by this man so precisely that he remained stuck in his head for a long time. No thought, piece of information, or idea could leave this man's head, that sheltered an extraordinary memory. Everything was identified, disposed, and well organized. Fortunately, Thought the Kind managed to escape when one night the man could not fall asleep and he took some sleeping pills. Holding on to the ticktack of the clock, he flew away.

### **Civic involvement (Campaign for the adoption of Lost Thoughts)**

Flying one way and another, going through all kind of experiences, and never losing the hope that one day he would return home, to Simon, Thought the Kind noticed something worrisome: there were many thoughts that belonged to no one. Wherever he traveled, he encountered abandoned thoughts, like the homeless children everybody talks about. Surely every thought, like every kid, must have a home, but Thought the Kind met too many discarded and confused thoughts. No one claimed these thoughts, and many of them were in a more helpless situation than his. They had traveled without direction or purpose for such a long time that they could no longer remember either their owner or how they got there. No one wanted them and they were too tired to continue searching for their home. There were so many misplaced thoughts, without a location, a purpose, rights, or someone to take care of them. Often, these thoughts became dark thoughts – sad and pessimistic – and it was now dangerous for someone to find them.

*This is how Peter, a painter in his fifties, imagines dark thoughts:*

Realizing how many lost thoughts there were in the world, Thought the Kind stopped feeling sorry for himself and started thinking of all the other thoughts. Most of them did not know the secret of flying – how to hang on to words and sounds – and they were simply floating over one spot.

“Every person should take care of their thoughts,” he said to the Angel of the Parking Lots. “People take care of the abandoned kids, or the stray dogs ... but why do they care so little for their own thoughts?”

“Not everyone is the same,” the Angel of the Parking Lots answered. “I observe people in the parking lot... some of them are vagabonds... but others are courteous and honest.”

“Maybe some people will want to adopt thoughts,” said Thought the Kind.

### ***A reader's likely thought***

*Plants need water to survive. People need food and water. But what do thoughts need in order to stay alive?*

At first, the Angel of the Parking Lots burst into laughter. People adopting thoughts – what a stupid idea, he thought. But then, listening to Thought the Kind as he recounted numerous sad stories about the lost and confused thoughts he met on his travels, he changed his mind and embraced the opportunity to become the Angel of the Lost Thoughts as well. He decided to try to persuade people to adopt the lost thoughts found by his friend, Thought the Kind.

From then on, every time Thought the Kind found a lost thought, he taught him how to fly from one word or sound to another and showed him the way to the parking lot. Thought the Kind and the Angel of the Parking Lots created a special place in the booth for the deserted and misplaced thoughts. The Angel of the Parking Lots put out an announcement on the cars he assisted with parking: “A new thought at no cost. Save a lost thought! Contact us at [www.thoughtthekind.com](http://www.thoughtthekind.com).” One of the children of the Angel of the Parking Lots designed the website, and listed all the necessary steps toward the adoption of lost thoughts, or how a thought could enter someone’s head:

1. Organize your thoughts (put all memories together, and separate the facts of geography from the foreign language words)
2. After thorough clean-up, contact the Angel of the Parking Lots. He will show you the lost-thought-adoption waiting list. It is easier and more agreeable to adopt worthy thoughts, but it is even more commendable to adopt a wicked thought and give it the opportunity to change. **For every Kind Thought adopted, you can park at no cost for one month. For every Wicked Thought adopted, you have reserved parking for 6 months.**
3. In order to adopt a thought, turn on your car cd-player (the radio or the tape-recorder), listen to music, and think about the lost thought you would like to adopt. This thought will hang on to the sound of music and will enter your head drawn by your kind acceptance to adopt it. You may feel a slight headache that will pass away in a few minutes. If the headache persists, it means that the thought and you are incompatible. Thus, you turn on the music once again in order to release the thought from your head. Repeat all of the above steps until you find a matching thought.

To the great surprise of Thought the Kind and the Angel of the Parking Lots, the adoption of lost thoughts intensified. Not only did the people, in fact the drivers, come to the parking lot to adopt lost thoughts, but they also inquired about their own misplaced thoughts and, if they were found, they took them back. They seemed less interested in free parking and showed true compassion. Shortly after launching the adoption program, Thought the Kind and the Angel of the Parking Lots noticed with much satisfaction that there were fewer cases of lost thoughts in Romania.

### **In Cara’s head**

Although Thought the Kind was very busy helping out with the adoption of the lost thoughts, he was also traveling in order to meet people and to find a way back home. On one occasion, he latched on to the notes of a melody from the latest Madona album, and

he arrived in the head of a dog who was sleeping peacefully under an open window. He was a black and white Havana Bichon.

The dog was terrified when Thought the Kind entered his head. He shook his head, rubbed his ears, jumped crazily all over the place, and barked frantically. He calmed down a little when a voice, probably his owner's voice, screamed at him: "Cara, stop it ... Quiet... Cara, be good. What has come over you? Be a good girl ..."

### CARA'S PICTURE

*Cara with Simon's Thought the Kind in her head*

When Thought the Kind heard someone call Cara's name, he froze. Cara... a black and white Havana Bichon... agitated... Was he really home? Was this Simon's voice? Was he so close?

In the meantime, Thought the Kind had no idea what to do. Cara was barking and shaking her head like crazy. Poor thing, she had a good reason. They say that dogs, or animals in general, have no thoughts or do not think. Therefore, in Cara's head, Thought the Kind was all by himself. Cara did not know what to do with the only thought in her head. Thought the Kind was also scared by the darkness and stillness in Cara's head, but considering how close to home he was, he hardly wanted to leave. He did not know what to do to avoid returning to the parking lot, as it so often happened before. He desperately wanted to fly swiftly and smoothly toward Simon, whose voice he heard so well and so near.

### Multiple story endings

What do you think happened next? I'll let you imagine the further adventures of Thought the Kind and the happy ending of this story, as in the American movies. It goes without saying that Thought the Kind must return home, to Simon. He must find a way inside Simon's head. But how? When? This seems to be the right moment. He is in Cara's head and he is so close to Simon. Must he wait for another opportunity? Must he experience more adventures and learn from them? Maybe it's better like this, even for Simon!

Write the conclusion to the story (or tell it to your parents) here or on [www.thoughtthekind](http://www.thoughtthekind) – the site where you can exchange ideas (or thoughts!) about the adventures of Thought the Kind and also your own kind thoughts among yourselves.

*Conclusion to the adventures of Thought the Kind:*

**PS:** I've just seen Simon and I took a picture of him on my mobile phone. Here he is. He looks exhausted. Whatever happened to Thought the Kind may have distressed him as well. He is sleeping peacefully, so I guess he no longer has a cold and all his thoughts are in their place. This means you have written one possible conclusion to the adventures of Thought the Kind. Congratulations!