

SAMSON GELKHVIDZE

PARADISE LOST

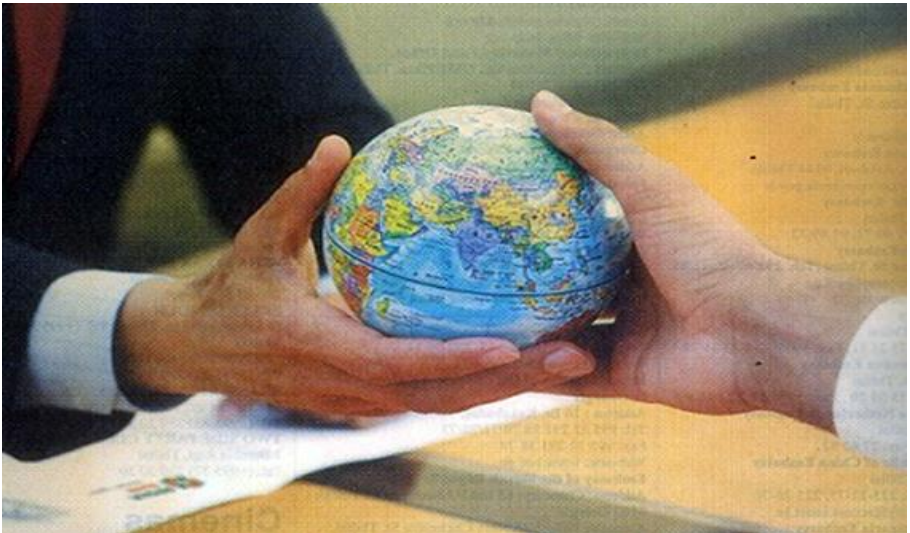
(Novel)



Tbilisi - 2022

Samson Gelkhvidze

**PARADISE LOST
(Novel)**



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DEDICATED

Creator, my creator and
my guardian angels,
As a token of gratitude for
What I had, I have and I can have!

"Oh, how deadly we love,
As in the violent blindness of passions
We are the most likely to destroy
What is dearer to our heart!
F.I. Tyutchev

Everything needs to be experienced in this world,
Everything needs to be tested and appreciated...
Misfortune, pain, betrayal, grief, gossip -
Everything must be passed through the heart.
And only then, rising at dawn,
You can laugh and love...
Wisdom of life

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PARADISE LOST

Novel

PART ONE

I

This year, the swallows arrived earlier than usual, and this could not but rejoice the hearts of the citizens, immersed in anxiety and sadness, because of the coronavirus pandemic that broke out in the world and the seeming feeling of a greater expected severity of the upcoming than in other countries of the world.

A state of emergency was introduced in the city and throughout the country, and a curfew was imposed at night.

It was not recommended for people over sixty to go outside, except in cases of special need and trips to grocery stores, pharmacies and other medical institutions.

Similar measures of special need have been adopted in almost all countries of the world.

The depressing situation was further complicated by the replaying of the critical moments of a past life, as if predicting the inevitability of an existing existence.

Like the last moments of life, enlightenment flashed in people's brains, forcing the good to become the best, and the bad to become the worst, although our hero was deeply convinced that such constants of human individuals did not exist a priori and life itself made them what they were .

Retiring each to their own world and looking back at the life they lived, people seemed to find now more and more unresolved questions in it.

I had to rethink my purpose in this life. Before the facts of increased mortality, many things were seen and evaluated in a completely different way.

Another queue of sms-messages interrupted the heavy thoughts of the city dweller.

- Sandro, remember, I told you about the first and second warnings of humanoid alien creatures, higher intelligence, who warned us and called for a peaceful life and coexistence of people, as well as for the careful attitude of our planet, apparently, their patience finally ended, and they decided teach us a lesson, - a message came from a neighbor.

- I remember, Zura, of course, I remember, only that it was possible to change us, - followed the mental answer.

Terrible and horrifying images flashed on TV about the situation in different countries of the world, which were full of thousands of lives claimed by the pandemic.

- Do not you love me anymore? - another accusation shot from the second message.

- Where did you get it, Thea? came the verbal response.

Why didn't you write to me for so long? - followed by a second message, as if anticipating the answer to the first!

Hello, I remember and still love.

- And everything is so short and dry?

- So after all, our correspondence is accelerating, from small to great and cosmic, - a response message surfaced. - What do you have there, what is your position?

- Almost the same as yours, as if you don't know, but now the television of all countries is ringing about the same thing, it has even become boring to watch these monotonous and monotonous television and radio programs that terrify the minds of people.

- No, so you have something like a foreign country, and it should be better, at least not much, than ours?

- Yeah, - a smile emoticon surfaced, - we have this virus abroad, - and again the smile emoticon graced the end of the SMS.

- Do you go to work?

- Deigned and carry.

- Well, how is the service?

- Better and more interesting, I must say.

- Why so?

- There are fewer people and more time to immerse yourself in yourself.

- What bright flashes illuminate all our miscalculations and mistakes of life on the edge of the abyss, isn't it?

- Yeah...

- Are you sorry?

- About what?

- As if you don't know what I'm asking?

- Thea, stop it, please, otherwise we will start ourselves into hysterics again, why do we need this now, because nothing can be changed.

- And why did you have to bring yourself and me to such a state?

- Again, twenty-five ... you are not tired of scrolling the same pain in our hearts and minds.

Alexander recalled the lines of a poem by a famous classic chiseling out on the keyboard:

As if with iron

Soaked in antimony

Lead you with a cut

According to my heart.

There was a long pause in the correspondence.

- You are to blame for everything, you left us and turned away from us.

- Hello, what is it from? followed by a written objection.

Correspondence was interrupted by an unexpected call on a mobile phone.

- Alexander, are you on duty at the facility today?

- No, batono Bezhan, Mikhail, and I intercede from next week, - came the answer.

- Okay, I'll contact him now.

Through the closed double-glazed windows, the sound of an ambulance siren swept through them, scratching them with an ominous reminder, constantly reminding the residents of the city to "stay at home", "do not leave the house unless absolutely necessary and necessary."

Oh, how deadly we love

As in the violent blindness of passions,

We are the most likely to destroy

What is dear to our heart!

- An ominous reminder of the lines of another classic followed in response.

- Yeah, but to ask you, so you are lame in Russian, not a bad lameness.

- Only one thing was needed from you, consent, and I was ready to leave everything here for you and for the sake of our love, a good job, a decent salary, I even agreed to give birth to you your only and cherished dream, your girl, and you ...? You have given up everything and turned away from your own happiness.

- Why did you need Thea, such a beggar, sick ... - Alexander began to slander himself with a bunch of nasty things and negativity.

- Judge for yourself, you have a rich, handsome, caring husband. I gave you in the best hands, as a caring father would do with his child, a twelve-year difference in our age, I hope, gives me the right to call you that?

- I hate you, idiot, you should at least bother to ask me. What do I want and what do I not? I'll strangle you, you heartless bastard.

"You reproach me like that, as if there was something between us?"

- It would be better if it was. And that one of our only and unforgettable meeting, it also, in your opinion, was not? You should have seen your eyes at that time, at least in the mirror. How much love and bright light of the stars then jumped out of your eyes, at the moment of our parting.

- I didn't see them.

- I know, I didn't see and didn't feel the whole depth and strength of our farewell kiss.

- Idiot, after all, you held all your happiness in both hands and missed everything in an instant, completely and irrevocably. Better not get caught in my eyes, when I arrive, I will strangle you like a vile dog.

- Yeah, thank you for everything.

Thea could not restrain herself from sending a short voice message, unleashing a flurry of dirty tricks and accusations on her interlocutor.

I don't understand why you're not happy? After all, you have almost everything that a person needs for earthly happiness, a father is alive and healthy,

a rich and decent husband. Daughter and her family at home, soon you will become a grandmother, a prosperous foreign country with happy citizens. And you reproach and accuse me of my refusal from you, from the desire to leave my poor and long-suffering homeland. I can't live in a foreign land. I can't do everything, and let me be the last bastard in your eyes for the sake of it, let it be.

Alexander suddenly interrupted the Internet connection.

II

Spring this year in Europe, it seems, was also frightened by a global pandemic and decided to follow the advice of epidemiologists from all over the world and, having self-isolated in quarantine conditions on a near-Earth planet unknown to mankind, gave way to more daring summer weather.

In some European countries, it was decided to allow relaxation of the quarantine period early, but subject to a number of restrictions.

Not only individual tables in cafe-bars were isolated, but also on the sea, under sunny ramps, visitors obeyed the legal orders established by the owners of the establishments.

In the morning, the sea was noisier than in previous years at this time.

A special, main violin in this noise was played by children's voices, carried by a weak sea breeze along the entire beach.

Occasionally, the cries of seagulls, flying near human clusters in the hope of their favor and begging for donations, wedged into their voices.

The sun was still very far from its zenith, but the warmth that prevailed on the beach already allowed its visitors to walk around and sunbathe in bathing suits.

Comparatively fewer visitors were at the coastal cafe-bar, from a table, under the ramp of which, with curious attention, I looked at the whole panorama of people resting directly in front of the silence of the sea, a couple of young women indulging in several activities at the same time, drinking fragrant drinks, listening to quiet and light, romantic music and conversations.

"Look at these animals, Julia, how they look at us," the fair-haired woman tried to draw the attention of her interlocutor.

- Hmm, hee-hee, - let Thea watch, do you care?

- Yes, but as if they had not seen women in their lifetime?

- Probably, there are no such beautiful as we are, - Julia imagined herself with satisfaction and with a smile.

- Well, yes, of course, look ahead at the beach, - Thea indicated with a glance, - how many of them are there.

"Hmm," Julia giggled, "do you not like the attention from men?"

"Everything has its own measure, my friend, doesn't it?"

- It looks like they are also not local, and they may also have problems making new acquaintances.

- Yeah, if the locals are better?

A couple of sips of delicious and cold beer from a can with a murmuring roar overcame the larynx of the blonde's high neck.

"Give me a cigarette, please, Julia," Thea asked with a sad look.

- Wow. Why, Thea, you don't smoke, do you? – surprised girlfriend.

"You can't smoke here with these men," Thea extended her snow-white hand and with thin fingers removed a long ladies' cigarette from the box.

"Come on, friend, are you trying to soothe your nerves because of them," Julia pointed out with a look at the young men sitting at the next table, strangers.

"Not only," Thea exhaled cigarette smoke.

- What else, tell me.

- Recently I went to the supermarket for shopping and I hear behind me an assessment of taxi drivers standing idle there, - they say, the figure, wow, but the priest is just class.

"Ha, ha, ha," Julia burst out into a restrained laugh.

- And what do you want? At your age, such an assessment by men, you only need to rejoice.

- That's not all.

- And what else?

- So I'm a fool, I took a picture of my sitting place in jeans at home because of curiosity and ..., - a deep attack followed.

- So what? Julia was inflamed with curiosity.

- And sent a photo in the messenger ...

- To whom? Julia burst out laughing.

- Whom do you think, not your own husband, he admires her every day.

- Don't tell Sandro? - Julia continued to laugh from wild surprise, twisting the pupils of her eyes. Thea nodded her head in the affirmative.

- And what is he, he liked her too?

- Yes, but not like everyone else, he is not at all like that.

- Oh, stop it, girlfriend, - Julia waved her hand in laughter, - all men are the same, as if you don't know yourself?

The waiter came up to the table and asked to put the contents of his tray on the table of the friends talking to each other.

- What is it? Thea asked the waiter in amazement.

- This is a present for you from the next table, - the waiter answered, pointing with a glance at the smiling men from the next table, raising their hands with glasses of an invigorating cold drink.

"With great pleasure," Julia agreed, and soon there was a bottle of champagne and small bowls of strawberries and chocolate on their table.

- In no case, - Thea objected, taken aback with the answer, - tell them that we are not alone here, and we are sitting waiting for our husbands.

Let's get out of here, Julia, - Thea got up from the table and prepared to leave with her friend.

- Thea, what do you suddenly think, the guys treated, maybe we'll get to know each other, talk with them about something else and so dispel our sadness and sadness.

- Thank you, - Thea snapped, - that's enough already, I've dispelled my sorrows in my life, let's go now from here Julia.

Girlfriends began to slowly descend closer to the seashore.

The serving men shrugged their shoulders regretfully and reacted to Thea's words, relayed to them through the waiter.

- Anoint my back with this, - the blond woman asked her friend, handing her a liquid against sunburn.

- In vain we hurried

with them, Thea, we would now sit together with them and give ourselves up to the delights of conversation and tasting everything that we wished.

- Julia, are you an eighteen-year-old girl? - Thea reacted in surprise, - do you know how it ends?

- All right, all right, girlfriend, I'm joking, trying to arouse indignation in you in order to dispel you.

There was a short pause.

- Well, tell me what happened next with Sandro, - Julia tried to devastate her friend, - only in detail, without missing details, so that I could also assess the essence of what is happening between you.

- I don't even know what's happening to me, Joe, I'm drawn to him, and that's it.

- And what about the husband, does he know about him?

Why would he need to know about it. He has a lot of work and business to do.

- Well, you live with him, don't you?

- So what?

- Recently, in bed with him, I imagine Sandro and, with his image, indulge in lovemaking with my husband.

- Girlfriend, what are you? Julia was outraged.

"Sorry, I'm completely out of my mind." But all the same, in real life, too, at one time with Sandro, nothing would have worked out for a long time.

- Why?

- In a couple of days, I send him his photo via messenger, decorated with my kisses and with a heart on his nose.

- Well?

- He answers me that he prefers to keep his love not on his nose, but in his heart.

"Hmm," Julia giggled, "what next?"

- And then it went and went. Every time we drown in mutual accusations about why we are not together today. And then he keeps telling me the same thing

over and over, pestering me with the question, they say, do you think God created a man for a woman, or vice versa, can you imagine?

- Wow!

- And, they say, a woman should obey her beloved man, or vice versa?

- What kind of posing the question with an edge? Julia was outraged.

- Who under whom, they say, should bend?

- What about you?

- Well, of course, I answer, like any normal person, that there should be equal relations in the family, despite the fact that a woman was created for a man, and he should not be a tyrant in the family, and that I have recently become a big feminist, and that I believe in equal relations in the family.

- Naturally, - Julia supported her friend.

- And then he writes to me that the voice of a man in the family is dominant and decisive, and if he is not a rag, then he should not bend under a woman, otherwise, they say, no love and family will stand the test of strength, and based on the nature of a woman, she will merge such a man, stop respecting him and turn away in search of a stronger man for her.

Julia shook her head thoughtfully and began to roll the pupils of her eyes, as if partly agreeing with Sandro's statements.

- And then listen to his even more interesting considerations.

"Well," Julia glared at her friend.

- He argues that the feminist movement has undermined the roots of the institution of the family and that it is also part of the fabrication and promotion of the shadow government, aimed at reducing the population to their desired number of five hundred million around the globe.

"Interesting conclusion," Julia said indignantly.

- It's interesting, they say, you women get equality in choosing decisions, and in case of failure, equality collapses, and only a man is to blame for everything, super. And then he continues further, saying that if feminism and equality, then why are women given a pension at sixty years old, and men only at sixty-five?

- Yeah, if they gave birth the way we do, then we would look at them, what it's like, - Julia was indignant. - Well, what about you?

- Well, what about me, I wrote him a clean letter that I literally do not care about the opinions of every man, and that I do not obey anyone but myself.

- That's right, well done, - Julia praised her friend.

- A man should be a king in the family, and a wife should be a queen, and, they say, what kind of king will terrorize and oppress his beloved queen?

"Oh, I beg you, well, you can give as many examples as you want, not to mention executions and murders," objected Julia.

"And so, my dear," he explains to me, "it's not only my fault that today we are not with you, then, according to your commitment to the feminist movement, we will take responsibility for this both - in half.

“Yes, Thea, you see, so you are separated from him not only by a different religious platform, which you both often manipulate in relations with each other, but also by common human views on life itself and the phenomena occurring in it,” Julia tried to explain with her girlfriend.

- And by this, you still were not destined to be together, at least for a long time, and therefore leave each other alone and do not pull each other's nerves, undermining only your own health. Leave him alone and calm down yourself, you have a wonderful husband, a successful businessman, a wonderful daughter, a son-in-law, and soon, I hope, a grandson or granddaughter will also be, what else do you want?

“If everything in life were so easy and simple,” Thea sighed, as if exhaling all the burden that had accumulated during the separation from her beloved Alexander at once.

- And what?

- It's not so easy to fight with yourself, Julia, with your feelings. Yes, you try to run away from them from time to time, and in part it turns out not bad, but then, but then ...

- And then - soup with a cat! Julia snapped. - You probably have nothing else to do - let's go and dive into the water, otherwise the body has already overheated.

- And he writes to me that he did not get along with his wife and divorced her a long time ago. And that he cannot now live with me and without me too.

- Well, this was not difficult to expect, who can get along with this?

- Then he wrote to me that I was still relatively young compared to him and that if at least one hundredth of what he wrote to me, I take into account, I will be a very happy woman, with anyone who loves me man for the rest of his life. As for his pure and sincere love for me, just like his feelings, these are the most

bright feelings in his life and that he will not allow anyone's shadow to fall on them, even mine.

“This is your Sandro, this egoist, that's who he is, and my advice to you is, spit on him and forget him,” Julia threw, heading slowly towards the sea element, “philosophers and psychologists probably say that men and I are from different planets, we are from Venus, and they are from Mars.

Julia plunged into the water element and, having swum a few meters, turned to the past spread on the seashore, continuing to rake the waves of a completely different element, the element of a sea of feelings and memories, dissolving in the element of possible, but not taken place love, love of life and death.

- Is it really love, like the water element in summer, it is blissful to plunge into it in the heat and not leave it for a long time, but it is impossible to live in it all the time.

The first steps of immersion in the sea element were difficult for Thea, but it was no longer possible to stay in the sun, and she did not want to stay in the shade alone either.

She clung to Alexander's words and with their help tried to come to a compromise between the contrast of the sun's warmth and the coldness of sea water.

- I can not live not with you and not without you, sea surface, let me enjoy your whim.

III

Despite the maximum tightening of the sink valves in the kitchen, water still managed to drip out of the faucet.

A closer look followed this process. First, a water deflection appeared at the tip of the tap. Then the drop gradually increased in size and mass until it reached its critical value, then it broke away from the faucet and, under the influence of gravity, fell to the bottom of the sink, shattering and dying with the remains of its material condition, rushed to the drain hole of the sink.

"Everything has its beginning and its end," a thought flickered. - Critical mass, who has the power to change its action?

Each drop was followed by the next, and so it would go on ad infinitum, until the whistle of the kettle informed the owner, rampaging the water boiled in it.

"Of course, this drink, compared to my wine, is far from its energy qualities, but nevertheless, it invigorates and gives strength just as well as it does, and most importantly, unlike my wine, it significantly drives away sleep and gives more strength," flashed thought when immersed in a half-liter enameled cup, sequentially loaded into it one teaspoon of instant coffee, cocoa, half a spoon of turmeric and cinnamon and one quarter of cow's milk from a bottle from the refrigerator.

Thoughts were interrupted by continuous calls on a mobile phone, which he barely managed to reach before they completely stopped.

- Misha, hello, - a clear female voice was heard.

- Hey.

- I've been calling you all evening, where are you and why didn't you pick up the phone.

- Sorry, I was taking a shower and apparently at that time I missed your calls.

- I could call myself, you know, after all, that we are waiting for you with the whole family, we are waiting for news from you.

- Yes, I'm sorry, I returned very tired and, having barely reached the bed, I crashed down on it and only recently got up.

- And now you will not sleep all night, but tomorrow when will you get up and when will you come to us?

- Yes, Maka, tomorrow morning, as you probably know, quarantine has been lifted and you are already allowed to leave and enter the city. So tomorrow I'm leaving for you, like children?

- Children. The kids are fine, just waiting for you very much.

- Yes, I understand, I also missed them a lot myself.

- What about me?

“And for you, too, dear.

- They are waiting for you with gifts, don't you forget?

- No, of course, I remember and I will do everything as it should.

After a week-long break, watching different channels and TV programs caused by many days of duty in the security service of the company where Mikhail worked, he approached his zombie box with great impatience and abruptly pressed the button to turn it on.

On his favorite channel, there was a block of advertisements, including an advertisement for the Ministry of the Interior, on the prevention of domestic violence, and a hotline number, which offered citizens to call if necessary.

Drinking a refreshing hot drink came to an end when hot crime news was broadcast on TV, including the news that a family had a conflict between parents, when the son decided to call the hotline indicated in the advertisement, and refrained from doing so for a long time and repeatedly threatening his father with this, he finally decided to take this step. After that, the father of the family was taken to the police station and there, hoping to calm him down, they used force against him, but having gone too far in his powers, he was taken to the republican hospital, where he soon died of a brain hemorrhage.

The interview was given to journalists in tears of regret by the wife of the deceased husband, complaining that her minor son, in the hope of resolving the family conflict, mistakenly called the police and reported the incident, and everything ended so tragically for their family.

- Hmm, - Mikhail drawled heavily, finishing his drink. - before, such cases, of course, rarely happened - and he went to the desktop in the room in which the TV was turned on, on which his wallet lay, and took out the money left from his small salary.

- So, - he drawled, counting them carefully, hoping to somehow increase their content, quantity and value.

Forty lar there and forty back, just for the road. Damn, for eighty lari, I could only live for a whole week, and now, in the absence of intercity transport, I have to negotiate with a car for such a price, with private traders who successfully use the quarantine existing in the country.

The cell phone rang again.

- Hello again, Misha, - a voice was heard.

- Hello, Sandro, long time no see, - Mikhail replied with a smile.

- Yes, well, what should we do now, if during the weekly shift change we managed to stay with each other for a long time and talk about everything that worries us, and now, due to the fact that we are being driven by a company car, in order not to keep the driver waiting, we have to quickly part with each other.

And now conversations with each other, and all the more time-consuming, have to be transferred by phone.

“Yeah, there’s nothing else to do,” Mikhail agreed.

- Well, I packed up and prepared for tomorrow's departure, - pointer Alexander chimed in.

- Yes, I'm getting ready a little, - if only I had enough money for the trip.

- Yeah, don't tell me about money, this is our common problem and not only ours, but also almost ninety-five percent of the population of our country.

- And then, such a difference in our salaries, - Mikhail noted with regret, - between us and our bosses, directors of departments, where there are three hundred lar and where there are ten or twelve thousand. We would have their salary, at least for a month, and they would have ours, they would have understood then and would have better entered, probably, into our situation.

- And what do you want, Misha, these are the legal orders of private companies, if you don't like it, they tell us, write a statement and leave, - Alexander explained. - It would be another matter if it were a state institution, although there are now such cuts due to quarantine and the state of emergency. Oh the coronavirus.

- As if we were better off without him, - Mikhail objected, - now they even take employees in a private car, and we save time and money.

- And besides, the four-month deferment from utilities as a gift from our government is also a significant support for us, isn't it? Alexander added.

“Yes, of course, it turns out that according to the principle there is no silver lining, the coronavirus has provided us with a kind of help and service,” Mikhail noted. - Eh, if they added us at least a little, it would not be bad.

- I agree, - Alexander confirmed, - but in our case, Misha, only one proverb works best about saving drowning people, as about the work of the drowning people themselves. We need to look for alternative and additional sources of income. Now, after all, the computer age and, moreover, remote work is in trend.

- Yes, but how many such Internet business projects we have tried, Sandro, you remember. Today, more than ninety-five percent of business projects on the Internet are fake and hype projects, and how much we lost on them, remember.

- I remember, Misha, but that means you need to look for a normal project in the remaining five percent. And in addition, remember that it is much more important where and what you invest money in than how much you get.

- Conversations in favor of the poor, just something.

- And yet. Okay, Misha, these conversations of ours can go on indefinitely, but you need to prepare for tomorrow's departure and it would not hurt you to relax after a week of service at work.

The conversation between the employees was coming to an end.

- Misha, what do you hear from your brother-in-law Vano, our former boss? - Alexander asked, - how does he live there in the far abroad, in the north of Europe?

“But how, Sandro, how should he live there, in a foreign land,” Mikhail explained.

- Well, I corresponded with him on the Internet, last week and he seemed very pleased, he said that he makes one hundred euros per day, and up to three thousand euros per month, respectively, and that for three days of work there he makes his monthly salary here, and that if he can work there like that, he will very soon pay off all bank debts and even buy out his house, mortgaged in debt, for rent, not to mention the normal maintenance of his family.

- Yes, all this is true, Sandro, but there is the northern part of Europe, and working twelve hours a day at menial work, what is it like and how long can he endure it?

- God grant him strength and patience, it's only a pity that in his person we have lost our great intercessor and now we have no one besides him who would say a word in our favor and for us in front of our higher authorities.

IV

Twilight was in no hurry to fall on the city. As if prolonging their pleasure, they tried to master it with as much pleasure as possible, which, in their opinion, was only possible by stretching time almost to infinity.

Neatly located in one row country houses of the suburbs of the capital with their personal plots were smoothly preparing for the meeting of the lord of twilight, the moon and the stars, to the shimmering song of the evening inhabitants of the land plots, various insects, never tired of surprising the owners with their skill.

“David, where did you bring me, to this wilderness and outback,” the voice of a young man sounded, as if breaking the idyll of the melodies of the approaching twilight. You might think that in the city it was worse for us.

- You'll see, Vano, the situation here is much better than in the city, - an older man immediately answered.

- Just do not forget to close the gate behind you in order to avoid running random four-legged guests.

- And what kind of bullshit is this, - Vano recoiled away from the dachshund who rushed at him with uncontrollable barking, trying to distinguish himself unnecessarily in front of his master - an unfriendly meeting with unfamiliar guests of the owners.

- Elsa, fu, come to me, - the stern voice of a young woman was soon heard, who appeared after her pet from around the corner of the country house. - You forgive her, please, she is not always hospitable to new people.

- No problem, we are not afraid of her, Gretta, a dog is a dog to defend its territory and its owners. David supported her. - Meet my son Vano, and this is Gretta, - David introduced the owner of the office to his son.

- Very nice, - answered Vano, stretching out a timidly opposite hand in confirmation of the fact of an acquaintance. - But it will be better, of course, if you manage to somehow calm her down.

- Elsa, fu, I told someone - fu, get out of here.

The dachshund, shyly tail between its legs, ran towards the opened door of a two-story private house, which housed the office of the owner of her company and its employees.

"Welcome, dear guests," the owner of the office, an adult man, said in broken English, raising his right hand in greeting.

- Let's go, Vano, - David called his son.

"You're welcome," Gretta confirmed.

In the spacious living room, guests were greeted by a set table with friends and company employees.

- Meet, - with an outstretched hand, the owner of the office introduced his guests to each other in turn. - These are my assistants Aldona and Carol, - the owner pointed to two women of fifty years old, - and these are my friends Bobby and Bill, older men. - Friends, these are our new friends and future employees David and Vano from the countries of the former socialist camp, - the owner added smiling. - Well, you know David one way or another, but Vano, his son, is a very strong, talented and promising young man who, I think, will be very useful for our company.

- It's very nice, Lazio, - Bobby confirmed, shaking hands with the newly arrived new friends of the owner, - new acquaintances and friends, it's always like new blood, capable of giving even more stimulus and energy to our joint work.

- Please sit down, friends, - suggested Lazio and offered to fill the glasses on the table with various alcoholic beverages.

Here, as in many European countries, the cult of democracy reigned, including at the table, and everyone drank the drink that he liked.

On the table, in addition to a variety of food, there were bottles of various alcoholic drinks, as well as mineral water, lemonade and other carbonated sweet drinks.

- Well, friends, I hope you will support me and make a toast with me to our newly arrived guests, - Lazio offered, raising his glass of whiskey.

"Certainly, Lazio," everyone at the table supported him almost unanimously.

A violent friendly conversation ensued at the table, and those sitting at it barely and with difficulty communicated with each other in several languages, mostly in broken English, with the addition of separate phrases in the local and Russian languages.

But the main thing is that those who were talking to each other managed to convey their thoughts and thoughts to the interlocutor.

Soon the women put out the light and left the table under the cover of lit candles, while they themselves retired to the kitchen.

- Where are they, Lazio? David asked.

- They know their business, David, don't worry, - the owner of the company noted with a smile.

To the tune of happy birthday greetings, they brought into the room a luxurious cake with small lit anniversary candles stuck into it. In the middle of it was placed a plastic marker with the number sixty on it.

- Oh ..., - drawled David, - Lazio, and we didn't know your birthday, and even your anniversary, why didn't you warn us about it, otherwise, apart from our wine and delicacies, we would have come up with something else and taken it with yourself.

- What for? Enough with what you came to us thanks to you and for this, - Lazio said with a smile. - Your wine is excellent. - do not say anything, and churchkhela too. But sulguni is delicious, of course, but we also have a lot of cheese combs - Lazio explained, - by the way, about

about their import into your country, I would also like to talk to you, David, but more on that later, now it's out of place.

The feast was gaining momentum, and the conversers very easily found topics for discussion with each other, and it was just as easy to switch from one to another, which could not be said about the speech they used at the same time.

Understood from a half-word, each other only local and newly appeared guests.

In the midst of the revelry, Elsa managed to escape from the kitchen, and she again attacked Vano remotely, barking.

"For some reason she didn't like me Gretta, I don't know why she didn't like me," Vano remarked with a smile.

- She is always like this with new people, - Gretta explained, smiling in response, - besides, she is probably jealous. Now I'll take her back to the kitchen and lock her up.

Upon returning, Gretta sat down closer to Vano.

- For the first time I see such a fierce dachshund, - Vano continued the topic.

"She has other reasons for that," Gretta explained and put her foot under the table to Vano's.

An electric current instantly passed through all parts of Wano's body.

"Not this," a thought flashed through his head, "not this, and not now.

However, he was in no hurry to tear his leg to the side. As if trying to completely and reliably bother in the magnitude of her body temperature.

- And what is this reason? - Wano asked.

- I castrated her and deprived her of the possibility of motherhood, - Gretta explained.

- What cruelty on your part, Gretta, - Vano was indignant.

“But in fact, I did a good deed for her, because she was sick from birth with me, and she couldn’t have offspring, since it would be sick with us,” she finished her cocktail from her tall glass.

“But anyway, it was possible to give her at least a small chance,” Vano retorted, stopping the passage of the next portion of alcohol in his throat.

More often than other women, Gretta had to go out into the kitchen for a feast, and at this time Vano tried to get to know her other two friends better.

David tried to talk with the men sitting at the table about business, and Vano was gradually taken away by his element of womanizer.

He already had no end to women because of his male attractiveness in his homeland, and now it seemed that the same fate lay in wait here too.

In a long absence, a break from family life and life in the rich sorority of his firm in his homeland, where he was known as handsome and Don Juan among women much younger than his age, suddenly, as if another new front opened for him, into which he great pleasure and joy decided to plunge headlong.

- Gretta, Andora also says that, among other things, you have spoiled Elsa by spoiling her too much.

- Not Andora, but Aldona, - Gretta corrected sternly, - how many times can you be corrected, you can't remember her name? And then Andora is the country, and Aldona is her name, please remember.

- And how did you manage to get used to life in our country, Vano? Carol asked.

- Did I see her, Carol? - I have to work twelve hours a day almost without a break, and when I come home, I fall on the bed immediately, as they say, without hind legs.

Yes, but on Sunday...

- And what about Sunday, one day is still not enough for me to fully recover, but ... anyway ...

- You get tired, probably very much?

- So what to do? Life is forcing.

- You still look so strong that you can handle it, I think? Carol smiled.

- Yes, playing sports in youth helps a lot.

- What? Carol asked.

- Lazio, I confess to you that of all your proposals, pools interest me for the future, - David explained to the owner of the company in the presence of his friends, who listened to him with great attention. - But this is for the future, probably, but for now we need to at least somehow gain a foothold here. My whole family is here, except for my daughter and my son's family, and you yourself understand that you need to send help to our people, and collect money to pay off debts and an apartment.

- We will help you in every possible way, David, - Bobby and Bill promised in one voice, - the main thing is that we are all here together and we can do a lot together.

- For our union and unity, friends, - Lazio offered another toast. - Bobby, - our chief executive is David, and Bill and I are his deputies, and we have an even larger team of people under our control, so everything will be ok.

- Yes, friends, I am very grateful to you in everything, but now my biggest pain is the son of Vano, - David pointed out with a look at his son, who was already completely immersed in the female environment.

"He seems to be in his element," Bobby remarked with a smile.

- Yes, he has nothing to do with it, - David agreed with a smile, shaking his head, - I'm afraid that they, women, would not destroy him and his family.

- Why not? - asked Billy, - let him rejoice and walk while he is young.

- Yes, but he has a very beautiful wife and two children in his homeland, his wife even left him several times because of his such adventures and then returned with great difficulty, after my persuasion with my wife, and then on condition that this case will be last.

Well, friends, what I want to ask you, he

he is very self-confident and works, as you know, at very hard and difficult work, laying concrete slabs on the highway, well, fortunately he survived the winter, and now it's warmer, but still, I'm afraid that he won't last so long, but whine and he is not accustomed to complaining, it is not in his nature.

- We understand you perfectly, David - we'll think of something for him - promised Bobby.

"My friend Vladek has a good place in vulcanization," Billy said, it's almost a great job there, would he go to work there?

"I think so," David agreed with relief.

- Yes, but for this you will have to wait a couple of months, since during this time one guest worker is released, and I could ask a friend about Vano, - Billy explained.

"You also have a lot of women who smoke, Carol, just like in our homeland, almost more than men," Vano remarked, finishing his cigarette with her.

- Yes ..., - Carol held out in agreement. Now it is considered fashion, emancipation.

- And where did Aldona run away from you? Wano asked.

"Ah...," Carol drawled, "she always leaves so early, she's not used to being in a man's company for a long time.

- And where is she in a hurry?

"Home to Mom," Carol laughed.

Does she have no one?

"No," Carol continued her laugh.

- What's wrong with her?
- Yes, that's all, but before I got burned in milk, now it blows on the water.
"Ah...," Vano drawled, "it's clear, but what about Gretta, what a snarky girl she is, almost like her Elsa?" - Vano asked indignantly.
- She has a slightly different, almost opposite story, it is difficult for men to get along with her, since she is a team-type person, - Carol continued to smile.
- It turns out that you are the middle peasant among them?
"Yeah, you could say that," Carol agreed, barely holding back a laugh.
- What do you have?
I also have a mother and a little daughter.
- And he?
- Husband? We are divorced, so he comes sometimes, visits his daughter.
Okay, Vano, smoke your cigarette and let's go back to the house, otherwise it's already cold, - Carol suggested.

V

Despite the late arrival of the coronavirus epidemic in the country, compared to other countries, it was in no hurry to assert its rights here either.

This helped to gain time and, using the example of the experience of neighboring countries, to stock up on experience in preventive measures, which were not always strictly adhered to by all citizens of the country.

In particular, this concerned the introduction of a curfew from nine o'clock in the evening until six in the morning, and violators were fined with an amount of money several times higher than the average salary of an average working city dweller.

Gatherings, even of a small number of people, were also forbidden in any place and under any pretext.

They introduced mandatory observance of social distance, up to two meters, in the queues of shops and collective farm markets, with the mandatory use of face masks, rubber gloves and special antibacterial agents.

Every day, radio and television programs reminded citizens about self-defense measures and the observance of security measures.

In cars, including taxis, it was allowed to carry no more than two people with masks, and then in the back seat.

All sorts of promotional videos and printed price lists of an informational nature were full of all kinds in offices and shops.

In grocery stores and supermarkets, depending on their size, only a certain number of people were allowed to enter in turn.

It looked like life in the cities was half dead.

"We heard what was announced yesterday," several townspeople standing at the bus stop discussed the topic.

- No, anything else?

- Yesterday it turns out that my husband and wife were fined. Each separately for a large sum for the fact that his wife was sitting in his car next to him.

- Well, have you come to this?

- Yes, and the husband objected to the policeman, they say, to pay them a fine and for the fact that they spent the whole night yesterday in bed next to each other?

- And I heard that they fined the same large sum of money standing in line in front of the entrance to the supermarket next to each other father and son.

- Not life, but raspberries! - affirmatively said a man dissatisfied with life.

- Stock up on food and cook crackers, - another citizen remembered with a smile a phrase from a famous movie.

"You need to stock up not only on this, but on everyone, and especially on sanitary products, antibacterial wipes and rolls of papers of well-known trends from manufacturers," added the woman who was waiting for her transport at the bus stop.

"Oh, really," another citizen seemed to remember. - Here, they say, why do people buy paper rolls in stores of sanitary products and in special outlets of the markets so massively?

"Because when one sneezes, ten people around him put in their pants," another citizen added with a laugh and a smile invisible under his face mask.

- I wonder how long our "joy" will last?

- Who knows?

- Some say that before the autumn elections, others that before the summer, and then our heat of forty or more degrees will clean everything up. It turns out that this virus kills heat of forty-five degrees and above.

"Such heat is killing us too," one woman, who was also at the bus stop, remarked with humor.

- I don't want to scare you, friends, but this virus has come to us for a long time, if not forever, and now we have to live and coexist with it side by side. He has become a companion of our life.

- A satellite, - well said, - a covid satellite.

- As if we did not have enough other satellites.

- Isn't it a partial implementation of this plan of aliens, - the thought flashed through the head of the passenger who got up in the minibus yellow taxi, to his surprise, almost empty, despite the evening rush hour.

He even managed to take a prestigious place near the window, in the front row, behind the driver's seat.

The minibus radio broadcast the news of the day and, first of all, up-to-date information on COVID-19 statistics.

After that, information went on about the figures of economic growth, the well-being of the people, against the backdrop of a pandemic.

- Hmm, - the passenger's smirk flickered, - accidentally and involuntarily cast a glance from the window at the electronic scoreboard of the currency office. - The dollar is getting more expensive compared to the national currency, and our well-being is improving. Paradoxes, here are another constant companions of human civilization. How is it with the classic, - I involuntarily remembered - and experience, the son of difficult mistakes, and genius, - labor of paradoxes. It's only a pity about the opportunities missed in my personal life, and about one thing in particular - I had to get out of here at one time beyond the cordon, as many did, including my sister's family. Yes, of course, it was not easy for them there at first, but now they are well equipped and live much better than we do here. It's just a shame that they don't even remember me for a minute, not to mention at least some elementary help, because even a penny there is equivalent to more than one of my monthly salaries. But how could I leave without my supervision my elderly parents, who in the near future found themselves bedridden in turn for more than thirteen years. The older sisters obviously wouldn't look after them the way I do, as they had families of their own and little ones.

grandchildren and granddaughters.

The more thoughts sank into their depths, the faster they turned into conversations with oneself, into conversations in favor of the poor, as the passenger's father used to say.

Sobered thoughts, news on the radio about the growth of criminal statistics on an economic basis, even within the families themselves.

- Thank God that this is over, - the passenger who got off the minibus sighed with relief, carefully slamming the car door behind him.

And without this information, life is not sweet, and even more so with it.

The rest of the way to the office where the passenger worked was through passageways through small courtyards of low private houses and over fading waves of thought.

Thinking and the brain automatically rebuilt to adapt to a completely different habitat, from which he singled out for himself, basically, a few. These are home, outdoor and work environments.

On the approaches to the entrance of his high-rise office building, he met a small group of employees who were actively discussing among themselves the current issues of the serious ministerial tender they had won on the eve.

What are you thinking about, Alexander? one of the employees greeted him.

"You never know what it's worth," Alexander answered with a smile.

- If thoughts are heavy about the crown, then it is not worth it, believe me, - one of the employees answered.

- Relax and accept reality as it is, it will become easier, - advised the second.

"Today I watched a video about Vanga, who even when she warned us about this, predicting the apocalypse for mankind," said the third. - She said that

absolutely everyone would become infected and that it was inevitable, and only a few would be saved and recovered.

- All, not all, but I've had enough of the thirteen-year horrors of my parents' bedridden illnesses in the past, - with these thoughts, Alexander barely had time to enter the reception of his office, when a young, pretty girl managed to jump up and asked him to undergo thermal screening.

- Thirty-six and two, - flew off her almost childlike lips with a smile, she then hurried to enter this data into a special file for employees, not forgetting to donate a couple of phrases of gratitude in return.

The working room, a little over eight square meters, at the end of the corridor closest to the reception, served as a kind of refuge for the employees of the internal security of the office, in which it was possible to hide from the prying eyes of other office employees moving along the long corridor of the floor, especially at the end of the working day.

The room was crammed with computer monitors, which were connected to the cables of surveillance cameras that were placed on all floors of the office. Three monitors with images of sixteen cameras each made it possible to view most of the office space and record video images on their internal disks for up to three months.

To these monitors, located on the second tier opposite the desktop, a monitor from a stationary computer was added, working in terms of speed and quality, solely according to its own mood.

As soon as the door slammed shut from the employee who entered the room, the phone rang.

- Hello, Alexander, it's good that I found you in the room, - there was a cheerful voice of the head of the security service of the office.

- Hello, batono Bezhan, - the answer followed almost immediately.

- How are you, Alexander? Is everything all right in our office?

- Yes, batono Bezhan.

- Records on the consumption of electricity and water by meters, do you keep accurate in the journal?

- Yes of course.

- Yes? That's great, you must definitely find and discover the reason for our large utility bills for these services, and, accordingly, tell Mikhail about it.

- Well, certainly, batono Bezhan.

- Yes, and one more thing I wanted to ask you about, there was no water in the office for almost a whole day today, as soon as they give water, go around all the floors of the office after the working day and in both bathrooms, male and female, drain the water from the tanks and it's good flush the toilets so that by morning the air there would not have deteriorated.

- Of course, by all means, - Alexander agreed, accompanying his voice answer in parallel, with an objecting thought, - this is exactly what I needed right now.

Son of a bitch, - Alexander was indignant, sitting down at his desk, including a stationary computer and sorting out sheets of paper with his notes lying on the table directly in front of the keyboard.

- Here you are, please, and on, the fruit and result of my many years of labor scientific activity.

Yes, I had a lot of people like you at my lectures and removed anyone from the audience with their bad behavior, - Alexander mumbled under his breath.

Despite their meager salary compared to other employees of the office, two employees of the internal security of the office were still kept in such work by mass unemployment, which was firmly rooted in the country, it seemed that for a long time, in the city, and throughout the country as a whole. Several office services, both computer and household, were far from in need of low-paid staff.

In the evening, after coming to the office, Alexander's working day began with hot tea and browsing the news site on the computer

ov and social networks, and after that, monitoring those Internet projects that he, by the will of fate, had to get into and which often ended very dramatically.

Many Internet projects were closed, and their sites generally disappeared from the field of view of their accomplices, only the lucky and those who had the instinct to get out of them could be lucky.

The first preliminary round of the office, of all its floors, took place at nine o'clock in the evening, and the last one, before closing it and taking it to the general signaling, at half past eleven.

Alexander, not without pain in his soul, walked around the corridors and rooms of his office. Even in the recent past, this building belonged to a very eminent and well-known design institute of all-Union significance, and many of his colleagues in the specialty and classmates worked in it.

The design institute closed slowly but surely, at first one of the fourteen floors of the design institute remained, then a couple of rooms, at the end one and at the end - bam, - and not a single one.

And then the computer firm in reverse order purchased the area of this building, until it bought almost all the floors.

Passing through the usual corridors, Alexander went into each room of the building, turned off the lights where he had left, closed all the windows in the room at night and turned off the computers that were usually left on.

- Grigory, greetings, dear, - Alexander hurried to say hello to the outdoor security officer from the special city protection service walking around the courtyard on the first floor.

- I wish you good health, Mr. Chief, - a thin, short man in a special uniform of the security service hastened to answer, having managed to stand at attention and take honor.

- Enough for you, Grigory, - a smile slipped on Alexander's face, - what a boss I am to you, and even more so a master, we are all equal here, with the only

difference that Mikhail and I guard the inner perimeters of the building, and you guard the outer ones, that's all.

"I know, Sandro, it's just old schooling and habit that doesn't let me go," Grigory explained. - It's no joke, I spent my whole life in military service, then I had to fight in the nineties in the west of our country, and then in that ill-fated eighth.

- I know, Grisha, you are our hero, I have heard different military stories from you more than once, and judging by me, you not only deserve the rank of colonel, but at least the rank of general.

- Yes, where, there, - Gregory was modest, - but I'm still thinking about how I'll retire from all affairs and retire not in jura, but in fact, to write a book about memories, everything about my military service and about various twists and turns of military stories.

"If you don't do this, then I will get ahead of you and write about you myself, as I have already heard your stories and adventures from you," Alexander tried to scare Grigory.

- Hmm, - Grigory smiled, - anyway, you won't be able to write like me.

"That's right," Alexander agreed.

- If it were not for my son - a loafer and unwillingness to help my family, daughters, I would not be here. What have I lost here? I am on duty for days, almost for a penny, and our bosses send people to check at night. Here's how last time, for example, I sleep myself in a superficial sleep, with my eyes open, sprawled on my armchair.

- Is that also possible? Alexander interrupted him.

- Yeah, - Grigory drawled, - didn't you know that you can sleep with your eyes open, like the guards at the mausoleum of our great leader.

"I can't even imagine it, how can this be done?" Alexander was surprised.

- Yes, yes, imagine that this is possible, - Grigory confirmed, - this is also taught in the army. In general, both the army and the war teach a person a lot, - Grigory explained.

- But not humanity and nobility I hope? Alexander objected.

"Imagine that this too," Grigory nodded affirmatively.

But in most cases, of course, when a person takes a weapon into his own hands, he already at the same moment becomes a completely different person.

- These damned wars, - Alexander sighed, - how many human innocent lives they take away.

- When members of your family, relatives and relatives die, it is very difficult to remain indifferent, especially when you are a military man, - Grigory explained.

"Yes, besides, when the country is still losing its ancestral territories," Alexander agreed.

- In those nineties, we defended ourselves to the last from our tragedy, in which I lost many of my close friends and relatives. And there, in those parts, they lived very well and prosperously, we just lost a piece of paradise, - Gregory sighed

with pain of the soul, - that part of our country in particular, this is the paradise we lost.

- Yes, we have quite a few such lost paradises - corners of our country, in its entire history of existence.

- Yes, what can I say, Sandro, the whole centuries-old history of human life is an incessant war that breaks out here and there all over the planet, as if normal and peaceful coexistence is impossible, even if different human ethnic groups, even if they differ for different reasons, - Grigory noted with regret.

- The struggle for human resources and the thirst for enrichment - these are the main progenitors of all wars, - Alexander added.

- Damn it, any war, under any pretext, - George concluded, - but not defensive.

- Exactly, - agreed Alexander, adding - a bad peace is much better than any war.

- Okay, boss, when are we going to close the office? - Grigory tried to get away from the difficult topic.

- As always, at half past eleven, - Alexander explained, - you see from below, on different floors and in different rooms, the light is on, in them somewhere one or two people always, as a rule, stay to work until late.

- All right, chief, in that case I have the honor, we'll meet later, - Grigory again took the honor at attention.

Alexander answered with a smile and began to slowly move away from him.

Alexander's return to the main entrance from the first floor was accompanied by a trill of fireflies and other insects.

- The heat comes into its own, - a thought flashed through Alexander, passing through the automatically opening glass front doors of the office.

Rushing silently up to the seventh floor, recently replaced by a new, foreign elevator, enveloped each of its passengers with its aura and a special habitat with luxurious lighting, in its realm of luminous mirrors.

The elevator car was ventilated, had emergency communications, and a special box of hand sanitizer was installed.

The lifting capacity of the elevator was a thousand kilograms and was designed for thirty people.

The cabin was distinguished by its exceptional speculation and absolutely did not allow any touch of passengers' hands to its doors, after which it turned on the emergency maintenance light and completely stopped until the forcedly called elevator technician arrived.

For this quality, Alexander gave the nickname touchy elevator.

VI

The morning of departure was unusually warm and sunny for this time of year.

At the suburban bus station, the chaotic movement of people was permeated with rare sound signals of vehicles plowing along their target directions and the shouts of taxi drivers with the names of those settlements to or in the direction of which they collected their passengers.

“Soon you will be leaving, friend,” as if interrupted by another attempt to call the driver, a passenger approached him, whose face looked very tired.

Two bags in both hands and a backpack hanging on his back betrayed him as a villager.

- As soon as the required number of passengers has gathered, boss, - the driver explained, - I should also go, especially since I have to go almost empty on the way back.

- Yes, I understand, - the future passenger nodded in agreement.

As always, almost at the wrong time, as it seemed to him, the phone rang.

It was not without effort that I managed to get my phone out of the holster of my mobile phone and, not without difficulty, utter a short review.

- Yes, I hear you, Maka.

- Have you already left work, Misha?

- Yes.

- When will you be with us?

- Maka, I am now standing at the bus station, near the right minibus, and the driver is having difficulty picking up passengers, you know how the fare has risen in connection with this coronavirus.

“You can’t explain this to children, Misha.

- I know, Maka, but what can I do, I, unfortunately, cannot fly to you.

- Couldn’t you have left earlier?

- Well, I still had to go home and pick up those things that you asked me to bring. I had breakfast on the fly, took a shower, packed your things for the road, and now I’m standing here and waiting for the imminent departure.

- Okay, okay, we’re waiting for you.

- Just keep in mind that I will turn off my cell phone on the way. I hope that at least here I will be able to partially sleep off after the last two days of sleepless nights on duty.

- And what do you do at night after the office closes?

- Like what, as if you don’t know, I bring women and am on duty with them, so they don’t let me sleep.

“It’s good that at least you still have the strength for jokes,” a sound smile floated over the mobile.

- And why are you asking such stupid questions, as if you don’t know what kind of night duty we have, then a fake alarm wakes up with subsequent calls from the private security service, then the bosses ...

- All right, all right, come quickly, we are waiting for you, - a female voice interrupted on the phone.

The fixed-route taxi rushed along the newly built autobahn at top speed. The track was almost free.

The passenger's favorite rear seat on the driver's side turned out to be free and the slightly opened window blew a headwind, lulling the sleep-starved passenger.

Outside the window of the minibus, familiar pictures of the road landscape ran through, which almost by heart, like the same movie watched many times, were remembered by Mikhail for a long time, since every week he had to drive the same way.

After a three-hour journey, Mikhail was let down on the highway near a fork and a country road to his village, to which he had to walk a couple of kilometers in the hope that he would be thrown there, to his house, by some passing car. And the fixed-route taxi, in which only a few young people were sitting, who did not take their eyes off the screens of mobile phones all the way, and a couple of people of mature age, who did not stop talking to each other and with the driver on everyday topics and about politics, continued its journey further, in the western direction of the country.

During all this time, Mikhail managed to barely quench his insomnia in fragments and, straightening up to his full height and taking a deep breath and exhalation, with welcoming words and with renewed energy, he moved towards his village and his house.

On the way, he once had to make a short halt near the spring and muttered to himself with regret, - again, it means that the problem of water supply in our village could not be solved.

And how many times tenders were announced for its improvement, how much budgetary money was spent, and, as they say, things are still there.

And I remember, after all, in the old, good times, such delicious cold water flowed from this spring that even some scheduled cars turned off the road here to drink our spring water themselves and give tourists a try too.

- Eh, well, as they say, what to be, that cannot be avoided, - with these words the traveler got up from his seat and went to storm the rest of his way to his home.

- Son, daughter, - the traveler called his children, not even having time to really go into the courtyard of his personal plot.

- Dad, my dad has arrived, - the sky shook, the joyful cries of an eight-year-old son, who rushed with all his might to meet his father.

The traveler barely had time to lower both bags, which he held in his hands, to the ground, when the son literally jumped into his arms and, clinging tightly to his chest, began to kiss him on both cheeks.

Immediately, as soon as the traveler's son was in his arms, the load gained during a difficult working week and sleepless nights fell off his shoulders and chest.

A little later, his thirteen-year-old daughter ran up to her father, for whom the traveler came to embrace

get down on your knees.

Hugs with her made it possible to gain weightlessness, and after kissing her, he hastened to inquire about her success in the educational field.

Rising from his haunches, he fixed his gaze in front of him, noticing at the entrance to his house his own eighty-year-old mother and forty-year-old wife, meeting him as if with the same smiling glances, but radically different from each other in taste, lightness and depth, possible for a person to know who could be both an affectionate husband and a loving son at the same time.

The path to them had to be passed with children hanging on both hands, who shouted out to their father the results and episodes of their weekly life without him.

- As it was stated by English medical scientists, psychologists and a well-known classic that a person is truly happy for only 2-3 hours throughout his life, - Michael suddenly remembered. "So, now these minutes are just one of those two or three hours, the happiest of my life," he thought to himself involuntarily.

The reciprocal hugs with his wife and mother were also outwardly similar, in contrast to the inner sensations.

The whole village economy in the absence of the husband was entrusted to the wife, and therefore the demand for all current affairs was from her.

After a short conversation with their domestic women at the dinner table, the children again occupied their father and began to "burden" him with their boasting.

Soon the eight-year-old son was pulling his father's hand, offering him to look at what he had taught his piglet, locked up with a sheep in a small caged enclosure and in a pigsty on the right side of the house on the roadside precinct.

- Let's go soon, dad, I want to show you what I taught our pig Naf-naf.

- All right, Vakho, son, all right, I'm going with you, just don't pull my hand so hard, please.

In the aviary, a sheep and a piglet, as if noticing their owners approaching them, joyfully ran up to the mesh fence and, grunting and making other joyful sounds, met their visitors.

"Look, dad," the son urged his father to pay attention, taking nuts from the pockets of his country pants and throwing them into the animal enclosure.

The piglet, almost on the fly, grabbed the nuts thrown in his direction with his mouth, breaking them with his teeth, spitting out the peel and voluptuously began to eat their core.

"You see, dad, what a smart naf-naf we have, it was I who taught him this," Vakho boasted.

- I see, I see, son, - Mikhail chuckled, I see that you have not wasted all this time in vain.

- And look how I taught him to march, - the son boasted and commanded Naf-naf, - one, two, left, left. Naf-naf, at the command of his son, really began to march in time with his left foot.

- Well done, son, - his father praised, - you really will make a good trainer. Well, how are you doing with the lessons, have you mastered the work on the school "book"?

- Yes, of course, I have done all the lessons for today, it remains only in my native language, a few exercises to do.

Soon the father was sitting at his daughter's math problems.

- Well done, daughter, - her father praised, - it's very good that you learned how to write mathematical equations so well and quickly. This is the basis of the foundations not only of mathematics, but also of many processes occurring in life.

Gvantsa even blushed a little from her father's praise, but she recognized the merits of her mother, a teacher, in this.

"If you learn in the future to describe all the processes that occur in life with mathematical equations, then you will be the first person in life," the father praised his daughter with a smile.

"I want to be a math teacher," the daughter confessed to her father.

- Mother, I'm sorry, the children didn't let me see you, - Mikhail apologized to his mother, who, limping, cleaned the remaining after-dinner dishes at the table.

- How are you, how is your leg?

- The leg is nothing, son, that's just the pressure tortured.

- Do you drink water during the day?

- Drink, son. How I can.

- How can I - no, at least two or three liters a little every day. Dehydration, or lack of the required daily minimum of water, is one of the main causes of pressure, do you remember that?

- I remember, son, I remember, ah, and how much do I have left to live?

- Stop these conversations, how many times do I tell you, you don't want to live to see your grandchildren's weddings?

The mother replied with a smile.

"Mom, mom," a mournful call for help from his daughter was soon heard, "Vakho stole my chewing gum, which dad brought us.

The search for a playful son did not take much time, despite several rooms in a two-story rural house of his own.

His mother found him first.

- Vaho, why did you take away her chewing gum from Gvantsa? - the mother scolded her son, - did you not have enough of your own? Did your father bring you both a pack?

Soon the father arrived in time for the mischievous son.

- What do you allow yourself, Vakho, how are you not ashamed to offend the girl, your sister?

- Dad, I did it for the experiment, just look, - the son suggested to his father.

The son sat on the wooden floor of the room and stretched his sister's chewing gum with both hands.

Moreover, he stretched with both hands in different directions only at the initial stage. Further, the elastic continued to stretch by inertia, then hang down in the middle and about

rush.

Then he repeated this experiment more than once.

- Enough to indulge, - Grandma commanded, - well, both down, for the lessons.

The granddaughter and grandson reluctantly followed the strict voice of their grandmother, and Mikhail and Maka went to inspect the territory of their personal plot.

Behind the house we examined the grape alley, then the fruit trees. In the enclosures for ducks and chickens, they collected three chicken and two duck eggs and, satisfied with the "catch", returned to the house.

- Do you see what an interesting son we have? Maka suddenly asked.

- Such a smart and inquisitive boy, - the father agreed, - he likes to check and experiment everything.

- Do you remember what the doctors told us in the maternity hospital? That the child will not have a memory, and that he will not be able to learn, to recognize people ...

- All right, Maka, please stop reminding me all the time about my mistake, - Mikhail asked.

- Wow, but, just think, the child turned out to have one extra chromosome, the thirteenth, and how much noise they raised, no matter what they said to us.

- Yes, you were right, thank you for not listening to me and the doctors, and we did not leave our son then, in the hospital. How many joys would you deprive yourself of then.

- And then, what answer would we give to God in due time? By the way, he also excels in arithmetic, that's the only thing, if we could find another good speech therapist for him, so that he would work with him a little, it would not be bad.

- Yes, Maka, I know, that's how we go to the city, first of all, we will deal with this issue.

After a while, the husband and wife stood on the veranda of the attic of the house and looked out through binoculars for the horizon of the nearby area.

- In my opinion, everything is unchanged, Maka, and you think so? - Mikhail said, lowering his hand with the hunter's home binoculars.

- It doesn't seem like anything, the creeping annexation continues, last week two more were detained and taken there, allegedly for violating the border, and then, after long negotiations for a ransom, they only return them back, and this is at best.

- Well, it's sad, of course, they broke firewood on their heads. Still, they are far from us.

- God forbid, but everything is possible in our life, don't you know?

- Another lost paradise. What else did we want, fed, watered, protected.
- Well, well, Misha, how much can you and I argue about the same thing. How long could such a monotonous and gray life continue, - Maka objected, carefully examining the horizon through binoculars.

- Do you think the present life is better? I believe that compared to the current life, the past was a paradise, and we lost this paradise ourselves. They themselves refused it, and for more than thirty years we have had nothing even close, with the level of the past life, and it is not known what else awaits us in the future.

- Well, well, Misha, I would love to live, for example, in Europe and would be happy to study my children at prestigious universities in Europe.

- Do you have any idea about living and studying abroad?

- Yes, of course, as much as you want, on the YouTube channel, on the Internet, what else is there.

- Oh, you never know what is there, on YouTube, any author can post any video, but in reality, life in real life is completely different.

- I am very tired of this beggarly life, Misha, beggarly and nomadic.

- So you finally decide where we live, here in the village or there in the city. Here in the village we will have everything in abundance, but in the city it is better for children, for their education and training. Well, where is it?

- In Europe, there is a paradise for me, a lost paradise that we lost because of you, when you once refused to go there, they offered us work and housing at one time, but you chickened out and refused, and now we are the whole family we pay for it.

- What kind of people are you - women, play all the time in a win-win game and always expose yourself as right. It is easier to risk your own fate than the fate of your family. To go into the unknown at random, do you have any idea what it is? I would take a risk and go, and if I were lucky in reality, I would attribute the merit to myself, well, if it weren't for me, but I wouldn't be lucky, then again I would be to blame for everything, "Michael got excited.

- Okay, stop it, now it's too late to talk about it anyway, - Mack tried to calm her husband.

- It is necessary to be born in Europe and live there first, in order to be a true European, to know languages and their laws well.

- And what about the family of your partner Alexander's younger sister, they also left at the time and settled now, and live well.

- Maka, what are you trying to achieve now, our quarrel? I warn you, I don't want it. We have so many things to do this week in the country, and I swear to you, this will not be the best start to our week of work in the country.

- Well, Misha, let's go, it's better to call your classmate Bondo, maybe at least he can help us with a tractor, and we are already late with plowing our land at the mouth of the river.

- I already called, I dealt with this issue in the first place, as I arrived.

- Oh, well done, when did you have time? Maka was surprised. - And what did he answer you?

- He said that he could free his tractor and help us with plowing the site, only the problem is fuel, diesel fuel, cat

I need to get the horn.

- And where are you going to get it?

- I also solved this issue, our neighbor Nukri will call on me in two hours, we will go to the nearest regional center and bring it in canisters, the only question is ...

- What's the question? Maka tensed up.

- In money, in what else?

- I didn't have them left, Misha, We all sat here for a whole week on my salary, and you didn't have anything left of yours?

- On the way back.

- Well, if you want it - if you don't want it, we return to the same question again, where is paradise? - Maka explained and answered it herself, - isn't it where you are at ease and well and life is in abundance?

Mikhail waved his hand and, turning away from his wife, went slowly to the stairs to the second floor, to his quiet and small room.

An hour and a half later, he and his neighbor were heading to the nearest regional center for tractor fuel.

The money for the road and fuel for the tractor, as often happened in such cases, was allocated by my mother from her pension "fund". But even this could not save the situation, since there had not been rain in the village for a long time, and everyone was looking forward to it.

VII

How amazing is this world? Amazing or smart?

- It's almost the same.

- Even nature itself and the living and material substances living in it are arranged in such a way that they gravitate towards such energy movements in order to perform minimal labor costs, energy quanta, as if confirming once again the well-known axiom that nature is a lazy person!

Alternating thoughts rolled over each other in weak waves, as if trying to carry them along, away from some upcoming exciting event.

On the shore of the exciting sea, the kids were feeding a couple of white swans that swam up to them with pieces of white bread.

A little ahead, on both sides of the wharf, crashing into the deep expanses of the blue sea, several fishermen importunately waved their long spinning rods from time to time.

Not far from them, above them, hungry gulls circled in the sky, trying to get ahead of the fish swimming in the deep waters of the sea in eating the bait thrown out by fishermen from time to time.

The time spent on the pier and conversation with the sea was limited, in an hour Thea had to return to work.

But before that, you had to visit your doctor in a specialized clinic.

At these moments, it was as if breathing more greedily than usual, fresh, cool sea air had a beneficial effect on the mental abilities of the guest of the pier.

My feet also got cold very quickly in relatively new warm sneakers.

“Don’t worry, everything will be fine,” the wind whispered to the guest.

- What will be, will be, - with such cold-blooded thoughts I had to leave the sea pier soon.

- Hello, please come in, - a thin man in a white coat greeted the guest cordially.

- Thank you, - followed by the gratitude of the guest, responding to the invitation of the doctor of the clinic and sitting down at his desk, opposite his seat.

- Taak, - the doctor drawled, turning over in his hands the data of analyzes and photos of magnetic resonance imaging. “Unfortunately, my fears were confirmed,” the doctor soon concluded, “but there is nothing terrible and hopeless.

“I expected such an answer,” the patient remarked sadly.

Tears involuntarily rolled up to his eyes.

- Unfortunately, as you can see, a lot of time was wasted in vain both before the operation, which was successful, and after it, why? The doctor looked questioningly at his patient. - After all, I recommended the operation in a timely manner, especially since you already have a child and could you take this step earlier?

- I wanted another child, - explained the guest. - You told me that repeated births would endure all the evil spirits and free me from the operation.

- And why did you drag it out then?

- It's not me.

- Then who? - the doctor asked with a grin, - isn't our health in our hands?

- It's him, - sadly noticed the guest.

- Who is he?

- He really wanted a child from me.

- And you?

- And me too.

- So what's the matter?

“I don’t know, he demanded an impossible condition from me. And that was long before meeting Ion.

- It's clear, - the doctor noted, but there is nothing, nothing hopeless even now, but a course of chemotherapy will still have to be completed.

- Is it scary and painful?

- Well, it's not pleasant, of course, but in our case we have no other choice.

“Understood,” the patient nodded her head sadly.

- Do not be afraid, Thea, we will do everything for you, - the doctor reassured the patient, - we have a modern course of chemotherapy, which gives very good and encouraging results.

- How long do I have to live, doctor? Tell me, please, honestly, because I have my daughter and her family in my homeland, and I still have time to arrange their lives, have time to put them on their feet.

- If everything goes well, ten years can be guaranteed, and then you can conduct repeated courses of treatment.

- In ten years I will be fifty, - thought Thea, - yes, not a lot.

- Thea, let's not get ahead of ourselves, at this stage we will do everything necessary now, and then we'll see.

- Well, doctor, - Thea thanked the doctor and, leaving his office, added her request, - just please don't tell my husband yet, okay?

- All right, all right Thea, don't worry - everything will be fine, Ion and I are old friends.

- And when will it be possible to start, doctor?

- The sooner the better, we have already lost so much time.

Waves of anger and indignation rolled over one after another, and a firm determination to take revenge on the offender on occasion and not forgive him for his indecision, to take the last, important step in their relationship.

The hours she'd spent with him now flashed through her mind, through her teary eyes, in a matter of minutes.

She was completely immersed in memories, almost a decade ago.

Almost from the first days of online dating with a new partner of one of the leading social networks, which began with a number of disagreements on a number of issues, did not prevent the young woman from going to a meeting with a man unknown to the village, with the namesake of her old relatives.

She managed to arrive at the appointed meeting place before her interlocutor, who, belatedly, unexpectedly emerged from under the arch onto the main street of one of the main districts.

to the cities.

The first thing he saw was a young, thin woman standing with her back at a distance of up to ten meters, who soon turned to face him.

What, didn't you expect me to come? - she shot in the face of the interlocutor who was taken aback on the spot, who soon took a couple of steps towards her and again froze in place.

But soon both of them rushed towards each other like a bullet, tightly enclosing each other in their arms.

They crashed into each other's souls like fire and ice, breaking through the shells of their auras and letting in a person unknown to the village.

It was also a collision of the soul and mind of two hitherto unfamiliar people with each other, the superiority in strength and advantage of which remained on the side of the first.

It seemed that neither she nor he had ever experienced stronger feelings in their lives.

They spent half a day and the whole evening together, the hours spent together in one of the prestigious restaurants in the city became the crowning achievement of their communication.

There were dances to the music and songs of the restaurant performers, warm hugs and even intimate kisses at the end.

At the end of the evening, after seeing off to her house, Thea even invited him to the house, which she had rented for a few days before she left for her new foreign homeland.

- Alexander, maybe you will come to visit me, see how I live here, in my homeland, - asked Thea, holding her hands on the shoulders of her new acquaintance.

- I'm sorry, Thea, but we'll have to sort out a few more important issues for us, - Alexander answered, lowering her hands from his shoulders.

- In which? – inquisitively and intently she looked into his eyes.

“You can be my relative,” Alexander said, bowing his head, “and I am very afraid of incest, as a very serious sin.

“No, you fool, no, I myself found out everything among my relatives,” Thea tried to reassure, hanging on Alexander’s shoulders again, “I’m just your great-grandmother’s namesake, and not her relative, you can check it yourself.

“I still don’t know anything about your relationship with your first husband,” Alexander asked.

“It’s all over with him, Sandro,” Thea explained, again almost getting into his eyes, “I married him not for love, but at the urgent request of my parents, and later, as it turned out, he was rather indifferent to me. And what it's like to live with someone you don't love, it's not for me to explain to you.

- I want a child, Thea, you understand, - Alexander stroked her bangs on her forehead and head with the palm of his right hand, - and you already have a daughter, and you are unlikely to want a second child.

“What a fool you are, why not, if I gave birth to a daughter to my not beloved husband, then why don’t I give birth to you, my beloved,” Tea explained.

“I don’t know, Thea, everything happened between us so quickly and with lightning speed, I can’t so quickly, I’m sorry, I need time to digest it all inside myself and comprehend it,” Alexander explained in turn, “but to make mistakes in front of you and cause I don't want pain for you, you understand me?

- What a fool you are, - smiling, Thea reached out again to Alexander's face, moving both hands behind his head.

Alexander tenderly reached for her lips and kissed her.

His aura radiated mutual love, the waves of which were clearly caught by Thea's soul. But it was felt that something was holding him back anyway, as if a fierce struggle was taking place in him between his soul, feelings and mind, thoughts.

Breaking away from her lips and still holding her head in his strong hands, he looked intently into her eyes.

- In any case, you will still have to go with me to one person, - Alexander explained.

- To what other person? - Tea asked smiling, - why put someone between us, Sandro, are you still not out of childhood?

Sober up, Sandro, because you are twelve years older than me, we coincide with you both in the horoscope and in the zodiac, and almost the same blood flows in us, we have common relatives, our hearts beat and vibrate with the same frequency with the same same frequency our souls. And here I am standing in front of you, your love, your happiness and your destiny, take me, I am yours and I will do everything for you, you hear, everything, my love, - Tea Alexandra tried to convince.

- If everything, then what I ask you to go first of all with me to one person, - Alexander stubbornly.

"I see," Thea said sadly, "the fault and the reason for everything is your religion and your religious denomination," Thea clarified.

- But she was yours once, why did you betray her? Alexander asked.

"Because I found many unworthy people in it," Thea explained.

- You would be worthy among them, who prevented you from doing this, traitor.

Gradually, the loving tone of the conversation grew into a conflicting one.

- No, I'm not a traitor, I'm a follower of the truth and its only true path.

"You are all martyrs, you and your entire sect," Alexander said irritably.

- And you follow the wrong path, - Thea retorted, - it was said that whoever is not against me is with me. So all that is required of you is just a little tolerance and religious ways.

, chosen by us, have nothing to do with our feelings and with our love.

- You are mistaken, love is when two people look in the same direction and perceive the visible in the same way.

- And what then was tonight, our hugs, kisses? Thea's heart skipped a beat.

- Passion, probably, - Alexander tried to overcome his feelings and the call of his heart, which skipped a beat in him with no less force than in Thea.

- Scum and scum, - Thea rewarded Alexander with a strong slap in the face and hurried away from him to her home.

Alexander stood dumbfounded for a long time in the same place and looked after the fox of love running away from him.

- The fleeing fox, - he remembered the famous melody, the famous rock band of his youth, and in the fox he now saw not only her, but also feelings for her, and the minutes spent today with her.

But all this was a long time ago, in the past, almost ten years ago, and now, heartbroken by what had happened, she was returning to work, to her almost hundred-year-old old woman, whom she looked after, and to her close friend Julie, who agreed to replace her with just for one hour, while she would have time to visit her doctor.

- Well, how are you, what did the doctor say? Julia asked Thea impatiently as she entered the house.

"I'm doing badly, Joe, or rather, my fears with the doctor have been fully confirmed," Thea threw dejectedly to her friend, removing her shoes and mask from her face.

- Oncology? Julia asked sadly.

"Yes," Thea answered in the affirmative.

- And now what?

- Now only chemo, reoperation does not make sense.

- What are our chances, what did the doctor say about that?

- Fifty-fifty, fifty-fifty.

- Well, nothing, let's break through, Thea, - Julia tried to console her friend.

"I don't give a damn about it, Joe, even if I don't break through," Thea explained, "only what will happen to my daughter and her family, with my father, because they have no one but me.

- How not, and son-in-law? First, and then everything will be fine, Thea, you'll see, the main thing is to believe in your recovery and obey the doctor.

- Son-in-law, of course, we have a good guy, but too young and not experienced in life, and his work is also from time to time, and his father, left alone in the village, is also not a great help for them, and for himself too . Okay, Julia, what will happen will happen, there's nothing to be done, go to your work, and so I was late with my return and delayed you, you see, and my grandmother has already sensed my return and is calling me with indistinct cries. Go, dear, go, and thank you very much, I'll just ask you, don't say anything to Ion and your husband too, when the time comes, I'll tell him everything myself, promise?

Julia nodded her head in the affirmative and left the house where her friend worked.

"Ma-ma, ma-ma," the voice of an old, sick woman continued to plaintively call her remaining caretaker.

- What, my good, what, my dear, - Thea ran up to her and, hugging her chest, tried to put her lying on the bed and lean her back against the head of the bed. - Left you, your adopted daughter without attention, right?

- Confused, confused, - the sickly ill woman could hardly intelligibly utter and scratched her caretaker by her hands with all her strength.

- Oh, you bitch. You yourself are confused, for what are you doing me so much, right up to the blood, and, for my love for you and for my caresses, you'll think, you left you with my friend for just one hour, "the bloodied Thea was indignant.

- Confused, confused, - the patient continued to shout angrily.

While Thea continued to treat her bloody wounds, the patient did not get tired of shouting insults at her caretaker.

Over time, her strength expired, and exhausted, almost without resistance, she gave herself to her caretaker.

Thea quickly and deftly changed her diapers, wiped her recumbent body with an alcohol rag and, pulling herself up, with difficulty lifted her from the bed and put her in a wheelchair for the sick.

Although the old woman was light in weight and small in size, it still cost Thea considerable effort to lift her and transplant her from place to place.

- That's it, my dear, now sit for a while, and I will bring you your juices and vitamins from the pharmacy.

- Ma-ma, ma-ma, - the patient drank her fortified juice with pleasure and not without effort.

- Oh, you, such a bitch, eh, - affectionately stroking the old woman's face, Thea smiled at her in response. - If you like something, then I'm your mom, but if you don't like it, then I'm a confused? You yourself are a confused woman, that's who you are, "Thea continued to caress the patient.

- Ma-ma, ma-ma, - the old woman continued to drink the juice she liked in her turn.

In the near future, her adult son and daughter came to the patient.

- Giani, Viola, hello, I didn't expect you today, - Thea happily received the guests.

- Yes, we have a small time window here, so we decided to visit you, - Viola explained, - how is our patient here?

"Ask her yourself," Thea replied smiling.

- How are you, mother, how is Thea looking after you? Viola asked her.

"A putana, a putana, you still don't know her," the sick caretaker complained angrily about her caretaker, "she always goes somewhere

then he goes out during the day, but in the evenings and at night he does not leave the computer and there he constantly talks to someone.

"Ah, what a confused woman she really is," her daughter agreed with her smiling and blinked her eye at Thea, "I will beat her for this and punish her very hard.

The patient, in a contented mood, smiled in response to her daughter.

- I hope you don't believe her too much, Viola? Thea asked as they both rushed into the kitchen, while Jani's son was sick, Jani kept her busy with his questions.

- No, Thea, and don't think about it, we can all see how well you and your partner look after her, and you in particular. She is alive today only thanks to God

and you, and thank you very much for this. I don't see, perhaps, how she came to life after your arrival, and how she got stronger.

- Yes, I constantly stuff her with fortified juices and selected food, so she gets stronger, to my detriment - Thea explained with a smile, showing Viola her scratched hands.

Why don't you cut her nails? the patient's daughter asked.

- Does not give, resists, swears and fights, apparently does not want to lose his last weapon of self-defense, - Thea continued to smile in response.

"Yeah, she's got a lot of character, as they say," Viola agreed with her, "even in her youth her character was very bad, and now even more so.

- Yes, they say that in old age a person's character deteriorates very much, and then her illness.

- It is not yet known what we will be like in old age, if we live, of course, to her age, - Thea agreed with a smile.

- Here, Thea, please count, it was Jani who took the salary this morning, and we decided to bring it to you so as not to accidentally waste it on other needs, - Viola laid out hundred euro bills on the table in front of Thea, - here is one thousand two hundred euros, your monthly salary .

- Oh, come on, I believe you, why count, - smiling, Thea took the salary, mentally distributing it already in her own, predetermined directions.

"And so you don't listen to her very much, and when she falls asleep, you can leave her for a while and go out where you need to, whether it's a supermarket, a market or a pharmacy," daughter Thea allowed.

- Thank you for your trust and support, Viola, - Téa thanked her owner in turn.

Parents are for children, and children are for strangers and for themselves, - Thea's thought flashed when she said goodbye to the sick children, - I myself have an old father, who has been left without my mother for a long time and also needs, probably, my supervision, and I here, I am at war with my patient, with someone else's mother.

It is rightly said that while the children are small and young, everyone pulls their mother towards them, affirming both themselves and others in the consciousness that my mother or my father, and in old age no one wants them, and the children are already repelled from them and say out loud : your mother, you should look after her, also with your father.

Having managed to sleep with the patient for a couple of hours, Téa sat down at the computer late in the evening and managed to Skype with her husband Iona, who was currently working outside the city in his homeland with his mother-in-law, daughter and son-in-law.

Then it was time to look through messages in social networks, including on the Facebook website.

Where are you hanging around all day? Can't catch you? - she read the message on the messenger, with a smiley smile from Alexander.

- Here you are just now I was missing, - thought Thea.

“You yourself are wandering around,” Thea typed back a message.

- You haven't answered for so long, are you okay?

- I have everything in the old way.

Why don't you answer my messages then?

- What's the point? What's the point?

- What do you mean what? You know that I can't live without you.

- That's how you live.

- I live, and what is life without love?

- You should have thought about it before, how quickly everything changes, - thought Thea.

- Before, so if I didn't think before, then I shouldn't do it now either?

- What do you want, Sandro, from me?

- You, your words, your voice, your smile...

- I was in your hands, and you rejected us and left us to the mercy of fate, and now you get me.

You know very well why this happened.

- Well, it happened, it happened, what now, why stir up the past for us. What's the point?

- Again, you went wrong with your crown question. Do not look for meaning in our meaningless life. You sunk into my soul very much and you sit there deep, deep and firmly, and I can't throw you out of there, you understand, and the more and longer you ignore me, the more I am drawn to you. Do you want my heart to be torn to shreds?

- I have a husband, Sandro, a second family.

- Everything is second in your life, you took a second name for yourself, a second homeland, a second husband, a second family, a second religion.

- Do not touch religion, please, I asked you not to touch this issue with me ever.

- Your sweet lips, blue watery eyes, your hugs and kisses, which pierced my heart and soul like an arrow ... I can't live with you or without you, Thea. Return to your original source, the first original faith. And you will be able to return everything to yourself: the homeland, and the family, and the name, and love, and possibly me. It's like you're always running away from yourself and everything of the good that surrounded you so lovingly and carefully guarded you.

- Yes, that's who I am, you're right, it's possible that one is never enough for me, and today I only have two. And why are you alone to this day, there is no one next to you, because you have everything one by one, unlike me?

- One as before and saved! Why do you think? I have one love, real and only, it's you, everything else is a variation.

- You know, it seems to me that even if everything could be returned back, then nothing would change.

- Perhaps, but feelings for you would remain the same.
- Enough, Sandro, I'm not feeling well, and here you are still getting me, ramming my heart with a slow bullet. Do not take advantage of the fact that you are not indifferent to me.

"Tell me that you love me too, just like before."

There was a long pause in the reply message.

- Tell me, write, I beg you.

- You know.

- Write, I beg you, write, do not torment my soul.

- You went...

Thea suddenly cut off the connection and, hurriedly leaving the site, ran to her bed and, slumping tightly on it, hugged a large pillow in her arms and, burying her face in it, sobbed, drowning in her tears.

VIII

With the onset of warm weather, despite the covid restrictions, there was still some revival in the city.

Greater strictness was observed in the central city market, near the entrance of which all those who entered were subjected to thermal screening and sprayed with a special antibacterial liquid on their hands.

What was striking was not so much the quantity as the liveliness of sellers and buyers in face masks.

"So, Ophelia, so we need to make purchases with you exactly according to the list, it's clear, otherwise they won't let us into the house, or they'll return us back here," a young woman of thirty-seven, with a dense physique, turned to a little eight-year-old girl who was hopping after her holding her hand, and happily pronouncing something to himself.

In the other hand, the woman held what she considered the most important and necessary thing for women, a stroller for going to the market and a list of products to be purchased.

- And what kind of cake will we have today, Julia, for my grandmother's birthday? Ophelia asked.

- What would you like? the woman asked.

"Of course, our national cake with peaches, I love it so much," the child explained in his native language.

- Here, too, I found another national woman, as they say, the milk on her lips has not dried up, but she already thinks nationally, - Julia smiled at her in response, who, together with her friend, freely mastered the local language for many years of work experience in this second homeland.

- So, okay, so be it, - Julia agreed with her, - let's start with the ingredients of the products needed for your cake.

- Hooray, I'll give it to my grandmother for her birthday, - the child was delighted.

Do you remember how old she is? Julia asked.

- Of course, I remember, - the girl said with confidence, - she has an anniversary, eight and five years.

- That's right, have you already prepared candles and numbers?

- Yes, of course, I left them with Sofa.

Who else is Sofa? Julia asked.

- Sophia, this is my new doll, have you forgotten it, or what?

- Oh, yes, I'm sorry, I remembered, but will you also treat her with your cake?

- Yes, of course.

- And then what will Grandma and us get?

"And we will make it big so that everyone has enough," Ophelia explained.

- And you will help me with this?

- Of course!

- Do you remember what your name means?

- Yes, I remember, Ophelia is a help, an assistant in our opinion.

"Good girl," Julia complimented her. - Okay, read what we have on the list for our cake.

- Peaches first.

Julia broke into a smile.

"Yes, peaches in the first place," she agreed. - And then what?

- Vegetable oil, flour, sugar, soda, gelatin, chocolate chips and a bottle with a pacifier.

- And why is that? Julia asked.

- How, why, and with what and how will Sophia drink cake, Coca-Cola?

"But you know little girls shouldn't drink Coca-Cola.

- Mom says that a little bit is possible, and then, she's a doll, don't you understand? Ophelia was surprised.

- But better, of course, lemonade.

- Or champagne.

A burst of laughter flew from Julia's lips, not expecting such a response from a child.

Ophelia turned out to be an excellent assistant and in time prompted Julia on the list of products that were to be bought for today's grandmother's holiday table, which she had carefully and diligently looked after for the past few years.

Meat products were given more difficult, since Julia did not gravitate too much to them and tried to use them less, but today she had to sit at the festive, anniversary table, not alone, of which she was aware.

"Ay, there are so many things that we probably won't be able to cope with the whole list, Ophelia," Julia complained to the child.

"Anything we can't buy, Uncle Konstantin will bring it by car," Ophelia hurried to console her.

"Yes, I would have taken care of everything myself," Julia muttered to herself.
- So, Ophelia, now it means you and I will go to the meat rows and buy everything we need there.

- What exactly?

"Well, I don't know, you have a list, read it," Julia suggested.

- Minced meat from beef, lamb and chicken and also fish fillet and shrimp.

- Well, you see, there are so many things.

- Don't buy fish.

- Why? Did she bore you?

- No, - Ophelia drawled, - it hurts me to watch them die, - the child explained.

- But as? Julia asked.

- And like this, - Ophelia began to imitate the movements of lips, freshly caught fish with her lips, and at the same time blink her small eyes, which caused a smile on Julia's face.

Customers returned from the market quite tired. Having passed the disinfection barrier for the feet, two pairs of shoes ended up at the entrance of the reception corridor.

- Fuu, - Julia sighed with relief, passing a full grocery cart and bags to the daughter of the birthday girl who met them, a woman in her fifties, of average height and a little overweight.

- What, tired, my good? she asked.

"A little tired, Athena," Julia agreed.

- I hope Ophelia was not a burden to you?

- No, on the contrary, she is an excellent assistant and, as a navigator, she always prompted in turn when, where and what to buy.

- Mom, mom, we also bought a bottle with a nipple for Sophia to she could easily drink Coca-Cola from it, - Ophelia's mother delighted.

"Well done, you are my smart girl, my mother's and aunt's assistant," praised her daughter, Athena.

"I'll still bake a cake for my grandmother today, kourabiedes and loukoumades," Ophelia shouted joyfully.

- Aren't you going to bake baklava? Mom asked.

- Baklava too.

- Well, that's a good fellow, and now quickly wash your hands in the bathroom, - commanded the mother and followed the child.

- You already got down to business, Aunt Lydia, - Julia asked the birthday girl, entering the luxurious modern European-style kitchen.

"Yes, but what should I do, I shouldn't sit around doing nothing on such a day," the hostess answered smiling.

- Here, it's just right for you to rest on such a day, we girls will do everything ourselves. Julia explained.

- And I, among the girls, then do not enter, right? Lydia continued smiling.

- Yes, but ... well, I'm also going to the bathroom now, wash my hands and get to work with you, - Julia explained, - I hope you will teach me so many recipes and secrets of cooking your national cuisine?

"Certainly," Lydia Ivanovna smiled back.

"But Ophelia and I didn't get to the list of drinks, unfortunately, because we wouldn't have brought it anyway," Julia explained with annoyance.

"Nothing, daughter, my son promised to take up drinking, he will bring everything in his car," Lydia explained.

"Yes, Konstantin organizes everything else," Athena added, joining the culinary preparations with her daughter.

By evening, the festive table was already full of all the delights and delicious dishes of national cuisine, from which one could distinguish such as tzatziki, kleftiko, moussaka, chicken salad, Greek fish and saganaka shrimp, puff pie, and from desserts one could single out loukoumades, kurabiedes and, of course, national baklava made from thirty-three plates of thin dough stuffed with sesame seeds, raisins, chopped nuts with the addition of various spices.

Julia was greatly struck by the large abundance of all kinds of spices, aphrodisiac flavors and peppers, both black and red, chili, decorating the festive family table that day.

Not far behind the dazzling variety of dishes neatly arranged on a large festive table was a variety of drinks, from which such local wine brands as boutari, malamatina and koutakis stood out. It was also on the table, except for Coca-Cola, and local beer - Mithos.

Julia literally ran her eyes around, and she was very sorry that her close friend, Thea, who worked not far from her, in a neighboring house, a nurse, was not next to her now, whom they called - a confused woman.

- Nothing, - she consoled herself with the thought that today she would walk in full, trying everything for herself and for her friend.

The table, of course, was led by the only man at the table among the four women, Konstantin.

The toasts, Julia had noticed, were not much different from those made at the table in her homeland.

There were a lot of table stories and jokes, as well as guitar playing and general singing.

"And Konstantin takes the guitar and sings in a low voice," Julia recalled the famous song.

After a couple of hours of sitting at the table and tasting excellent dishes of local national cuisine, as well as booze, Julia was seized by an unhealthy body heat. Catching the mysterious glance of Konstantin, she quickly blushed.

What's in that colorful bottle? - she tried to interrupt the awkward confrontation of views with a man who was also pretty tipsy, holding out her hand in the direction of the still untried drink.

- Oh, - Konstantin drawled, putting the guitar aside, - how is it, but, forgive me, Julia, that I forgot about it, this is our famous mastic.

- This is our, national, spicy liquor, with the addition of mastic resin from a pistachio bush, - Lidia Ivanovna explained.

- Mastics? - Julia repeated in surprise, in which the association with mastic for the floor, so popular in her homeland, immediately surfaced.

- Yes, yes - only this is a different mastic - added Athena. - The drink is unique in that it contains resin from pistachio trees that grow only on the island of Chios.

- Oh, - drawled Julia, - even so? Well, then it's a sin not to try it.

"Well, of course," Konstantin agreed with her and hurried to fill her empty glass with this drink standing on the table in front of Julia.

"Oh, very tasty," Julia agreed, sipping the bewitching liquid and biting into Melomacaron cookies.

Soon the birthday girl asked Julia to help her retire for a short time to the place she needed.

"Mom, I'll help," Athena replied.

- No, no, don't, - Lydia snapped, - Julia will help me, she's not in the first place.

Soon, Lydia, with the help of a special, walking frame for the sick and disabled, accompanied by her nurse, went with a leisurely and cautious step to a place where even kings go alone.

Having barely rendered assistance to the patient, accompanied to the place she needed, Julia closed the door behind her and began to straighten her hair, peering attentively into a high mirror, attached

not far from her, almost on the opposite wall of the apartment, as Konstantin appeared next to her, heading to the kitchen for additional bottles of booze.

The door of the corridor was only not fully ajar, Konstantin and Julia for a moment found themselves facing each other, as if hesitating and stuck in bypassing each other.

Konstantin stared into her eyes, to which Julia replied with a smile and turning her eyes away from him, blushing even more at the same time.

Suddenly he grabbed her by the head with both hands and kissed her on the lips.

- Oh, don't, - Julia pleaded, barely freeing herself from his lips, - what are you doing?

- Konstantin again clung to her lips, and this time his kiss was longer and deeper.

- What are you doing? she whispered softly.

- I AM? - Lydia's voice was heard in response, - I'll be there soon.

"Let me go now," said Julia. - jumping away from Konstantin.

“No need, daughter, I can handle it myself,” Lidia Ivanovna continued her explanations, not guessing what was happening outside the door.

- Konstantin managed to catch Julia running away from her by the hand into the kitchen, but she managed to free herself from his grip and run away not far from him.

Konstantin caught up with Julia in the kitchen and once again began to kiss her, holding her in his strong arms.

“Let me go now,” Julia pushed him away with both hands, “crazy, let me go, otherwise I will scream.” What do you allow yourself, you are married, and I am a married woman, - Julia began to put herself in order and hurried out into the hall where the table was laid.

- Well, what about our mother? - Athena asked, - will she return to us soon?

“Soon,” Julia replied, smiling.

- What's the matter with you, Julia, are you so red all over? Athena asked.

- It's a drink, probably, - she answered, continuing to straighten her hair.

“Here I am,” Konstantin exclaimed, returning to the table with new bottles of booze raised in his hands.

After that, the feast did not last long, and, noticing the tiredness of her mother, Athena invited her brother to leave her house.

- Let's go already, probably, Konstantin, mom is tired, Julia, too, let them rest, they had a hard day today.

- Is the anniversary a difficult day, and not a festive and solemn one? - objected amused Konstantin.

“That's enough already,” his sister severely interrupted him, “otherwise your wife Aella will start a scandal for you and ask you out of the house, like last time, and then I won't take you to my house drunk, because this also doesn't really like my husband.

“Well, then I'll go back to my mother,” Konstantin explained, “mother, I have the right to spend the night with you, will you accept your son, won't you drive him away?”

“Of course, I'll accept, son, but where should I go, how many free rooms I have here,” consoled the son's mother, “just don't anger your wife again, Athena tells you right, go already son, and come back tomorrow, if you want to.

- Tomorrow I'm at work, mom, - Konstantin explained, - today I also barely escaped, I asked the authorities very much, but you know how much work we have in the port every day?

“Well then, next time,” my mother smiled back.

“Since women ask, then their request is law,” Konstantin concluded and began to get ready to leave.

“Ophelia, daughter, get ready and we are going already,” Athena called her daughter, who was playing in the next room.

- Mom, I'll soon, I'll feed Sophia more and go, - a child's voice shouted in response.

- Whom did I say, quickly? shouted Athena.

"Mom, please, just a little more," a childish voice pleaded.

- Quick, who did I tell?

"Children are the same everywhere," thought Julia.

Soon, after seeing off the guests, Julia, together with her patient, also went to the bedroom for the night.

That night Julia had a strange dream. It was as if she was sleeping in a den, next to a big bear, who hugged her tightly and warmed her with his warmth.

Table food and booze continued to do their job.

Obscene desires and thoughts began to overcome her in a dream and more and more drag her into their nets.

It seemed to her as if the bear, lying next to her, began obscenely to spread his arms and touch her in the forbidden places of her body. Here his paw slipped suddenly through her nightgown and seized her bare breasts. Later, she stroked her legs, moving up and down.

- I wonder how he manages to stroke me all over my body without scratching me with his claws? - Julia was surprised in a dream, more and more giving in to the caresses of an unbridled beast.

Soon she heard the sound of tearing matter and finally felt the weight of the beast climbing on top of her.

"Don't, I beg you," she pleaded, and, exhausted, she barely opened her eyes, when she immediately felt a strong male hand pressed to her lips on her face.

- Quiet, otherwise you will wake up your mother like that, - a male voice whispered to her in response, continuing to hold her completely in his arms.

"Don't, I beg you," she pleaded, now to herself, "and realizing that resistance was already useless and too late, she, exhausted, completely surrendered to her voluptuous sensations, which lasted, as it seemed to her, all long night.

In the morning Julia was awakened by her painful voice

th, who asked her to substitute a special medical duck for her.

All broken and with a terrible headache, she got up from the bed and fulfilled the request of the patient.

"Bastard, bastard," with these thoughts she returned to her disheveled bed, on which none of her bedding made of cloth was in its proper place.

She hardly fell back into it and, struggling with thoughts of getting up and taking a shower, or succumbing to her fatigue and continuing her sleep, in the end, all the same, having gathered her last strength, she hardly got up from the bed and went to the bathroom to take a shower. .

Having let warm water from the shower hose, she took off her nightgown torn on it and looked at herself in the mirror, standing in "what mother gave birth to"

with thoughts and with a desire to wash off as soon as possible, all traces of the animal with which she had to spend almost all night.

Returning to bed slightly cheered, she easily already gathered all her bed linen and stuffed it into the cavity of a modern automatic washing machine, laying herself a new one.

On the floor, she found an expensive, gilded men's bracelet, which she put under her pillow and, burying her face in it, silently sobbed, fearing to wake her patient.

PART TWO

IX

The metropolitan major European port city continues to amaze with its unique silhouette, organically embedded in the local landscape, especially for people who first came here.

Although it was difficult to surprise the locals with new tourists visiting their country, nevertheless, the behavior and gait of one of them attracted the attention of some townspeople.

He walked, inquisitively looking around, along one of the main streets, one of the central districts of the city, never ceasing to be surprised and delighted with the architectural coloring of one of the largest cities in the country.

Expressive and sharp, not the same spiers of the temples alternated with tiled, copper roofs of old buildings, next to which towered modern high-rise buildings.

- Such beauty of this city can be enjoyed forever, - the thought of a visiting passer-by overcame.

And although he was dressed warmly, but still, over time, the northern coolness penetrated his body, and he decided to escape from it in a small cafe-bar.

The guests of the bar greeted the foreign guest quite kindly, who left his outer jacket in the dressing room. The young thin figure of the visitor of an athletic build almost immediately attracted the attention of the young waitresses working there.

They enthusiastically fell for the handsome appearance of a young guest of about forty, and then exchanged glances with each other, as if taking permission from each other for the right to serve him, which went to the most agile and quick of them.

Approaching the table, at which the guest managed to settle down, one of the waitresses smiled sweetly at him and greeted him in English and handed him the price list of the assortment offered by the bar.

The anteroom nodded his head approvingly in gratitude and smiled sweetly in response to a cute waitress in a short red skirt and slender legs.

- Horror, - thought, shuddering, the hallway, - is it really not cold at all?

Although they are a northern breed, not like us southerners, - the answer to himself instantly followed.

The hallway inquisitively opened a cardboard book with a price list inside and quickly began to run his eyes over it.

- You might think that I am very familiar with their menu and their cuisine, - the guest remarked to himself with a grin.

Then he carefully put the price list aside and, calling the girl serving the table in broken English, asked her to bring a cup of hot cappuccino coffee.

- She would rather come, - the guest prayed to himself, dialing a familiar phone number on his mobile.

While coffee was being prepared for him, two young beauties - waitresses continued to talk to each other, without taking their eyes off the guest.

The guest also noticed their attention.

- I also really like you, girls, however, sorry, with my English, unfortunately, I can't get to know you closely, - the guest thought, - and besides, I expect to meet one person.

Waiting after a nice coffee became more and more exciting as I had to choose between sitting warm in the coffee bar and smoking outside in the cold.

- Finally, I've been waiting for you, - the guest said happily, meeting his girlfriend, who soon entered the cafe-bar, - where are you still, Carol?

- I'm sorry, Vano, - Carol explained in poor Russian, - I negotiated with my friends about you.

- So what? Vano greedily asked the young woman five years younger than her, beaming in a satisfied smile as a sign of a good outcome of her negotiations.

- They said that they would help you in every possible way to pass the interview, that they would talk with the right people, the only thing that is required of you is to honestly and truthfully answer all the questions of the members of the commission.

"There is no bazaar," Vano answered vulgarly and confidently, also far from being in smooth Russian.

- What? - not understanding his answer, asked Carol.

- Sorry, of course, but with my Russian and English?

- Do not worry, they have their own certified translators in the commission, and you will not have problems with this, - Carol reassured her new friend.

- Well then, okay, - flashed his English Vano with a smile and offered Carol something from the price list, but she agreed only for coffee.

Meanwhile, Vano occasionally shot back a look at the young waitresses sitting behind the high bar, who continued to watch their couple intently.

"Well then, if you don't do anything else, shall we go already?" - asked Vano, - but where?

"We have a few hours before the commission, and if you don't mind, then I can show you some of the sights of our city," Carol suggested.

- With pleasure, - Vano agreed, - only it's a bit cold outside - he hesitated.

"Don't be afraid, come with me, you'll warm up in the car," she took his hand with a joyful smile and hurried in spite of the prettier waitress girls, to drag him away from their hunting and predatory looks, which did not go unnoticed for her.

- So, where are we going first? - asked Vano, rubbing the palms of his hands together.

"Oh, Vano, believe me, there is so much to see in our city," Carol urged, starting her small four-seater white car.

colors. Every year, before the pandemic, more than three million people came to us," Carol explained, "we have over seventy museums, more than fifty parks, several dozen churches.

- How do you know all this? - Vano asked, - did you work as a guide?

"Yes, before I got to our guys in the office," Carol explained, smiling and looking at him.

- And why did you quit this job then, you didn't like it very much?

- It's just, after a while I got tired, the same thing every day, only people are different, you know?

- I understand, - Vano nodded affirmatively.

"But here in the office, the people are the same, but the cases are different," Carol continued to smile.

- Logically, do not say anything. I have at work, at home, almost the same thing.

Tell me more about yourself and your work later.

- Absolutely, - Vano agreed, - so where are we going now in the first place?

- Let's go to the oldest district of our city, admire the tall multi-colored houses, there are still many beautiful shops and several restaurants.

- Oh, - Vano cried out jokingly, - I don't want restaurants anymore.

- Why? Carol asked with a smile.

Everything is so expensive here.

- Yeah, there's nothing you can do. Europe, Carol agreed. - True, you will not have much time with your work, but on the weekends you can meet. And how is your family, they won't say anything?

- Don't worry, I'll tell them that I'm running around on office business, because you're still our guest on bird rights until you pass the interviews at the commission, and you can't teach us hospitality.

- Well, thank you.

"Here, take it," she handed Vano a plastic card, leaving the car in the parking lot.

- What is it? Wano asked.

- This is our special tourist card that allows you to use public transport for an unlimited number of trips for free and enter each of the museums of our city once.

- What a joy, thank you very much, - I love going to museums madly, - Vano slyly cunning. "Oh, they told me and hammered me at school, learn English well, that it can be very useful in the future, but I won't," Vano recalled with regret, "I didn't really study any subject at all, but why, I thought, English should have been exception. Now I understand perfectly why, but, unfortunately, it's already too late, - Vano's thoughts continued.

- How many people live in your city, Carol?

- A million and a half.

- We must, and so do we.

- Our city consists of five administrative parts, the first of which is mainly the territory of the old city, the second is the old, pre-war, and the rest are new suburban areas.

- Well, everything is almost like ours, and even the place of my residence - on the outskirts, both there at home, and here in a foreign land.

- It's not so bad on the one hand.

- Yes, of course, - Vano agreed, - because it's very cool and long to go to work and other things to the center.

Yes, but if you have a car...

"Unfortunately, she often needs to be given expensive fuel to drink," Vano explained.

- Yes, it is a little, - agreed Carol.

Soon the young couple were admiring the royal palace, the official residence and residence of the country's monarch and his family.

- It's cool, - Vano cunning again, - overcoming the idea that the building is like a building and does not stand out for any special beauty.

Soon the young couple found themselves near the city hall, which today serves as the municipal council of the city, located on an island next to the bank of the city river.

Here nearby, in the car, Vano's parents were waiting for the young couple.

- Father, why were you worried, - Vano threw a phrase towards his father, who got out of the car, - he also bothered his mother because of this.

- What worries can there be, son, when it comes to you, your mother also did not sit at home.

- Do not worry, Mr. Dato, everything will be fine, - Carol interrupted the conversation between father and son, - I agreed with my friends, they will help Vano.

- Thank you, Carol, God bless you, daughter, we will not forget this kindness of yours, - Father Vano thanked.

After more than half an hour of waiting in cars behind the town hall building and the same time in the reception of the waiting room in front of the conference room of the commission for reviewing the cases of emigrants who have flooded the

country lately, it was finally the turn of the consideration of the case of Vano, who was brought into the hall by a friend Carol.

They exchanged a few words in the local language, Vano was taken to the hearing room for his case.

He managed to turn around and throw a doomed look at his parents and girlfriend who were rooting for him. In response, the smiles of the sixty-year-old father, the tenderness of the mother, as well as the hesitation of Carol's tightly clenched tender fist in solidarity with him and parting words of cheerful endurance, one of the important tests and exams of his new overseas life, followed.

- Hu from Wano? he was met by the voice of a young woman in the uniform of a legal department in the hallway in front of the meeting room.

- Ahm Vano, - came the answer, - my English came in handy, - Vano thought happily.

- Pliz follow me, - asked the girl in civilian clothes, - may her

m from Agnet and ai em wil bi yo translator, she explained. - Did you understand? she added in broken Russian.

- Yes, ah um andestend, - how, it turns out that I know so much in English, - Vano was delighted.

- Do not bother, I will help you with the translation, - Agnetha explained, noticing the language difficulties of her client, - the only thing I will ask you is not to rush your answers and think carefully about every question, members of the emigration commission.

- Okay, okay, - agreed Vano, not wanting to miss the muse of his English.

Members of the special emigration commission were waiting for them in the meeting room, actively busy writing in their journals.

"Fathers, all three of them are serious and respectable," a thought flashed through Vano's head.

All three members of the commission were men of respectable age, dressed up in special black tuxedos and white shirts with black bows.

In front of each of them, on a long rectangular table, were laptops, bottles of mineral water and locally sweetened soda.

Each of them was also equipped with special journals in which they kept their scrupulous notes.

- Hi, bespectacled, - Vano greeted them silently, - get up, the court is coming. More and more humorous waves covered Vano's soul.

- Please, take a seat over there, - the chief pointed out in response - the chairman of the commission, sitting in the center, in English.

The entire conversation between both sides was in English and only for Vano was translated into Russian.

- So my Russian came in handy too, - Vano remarked proudly to himself. - Any language of any people of the world is immortal, and even more so such common languages as Russian, English and other languages.

- So, Mr. Vano, - the presiding member of the commission addressed him, - today we are considering your application for the right to reside in our country.

- Es of cos! Vano scoffed in response, increasingly resorting to his sense of humor to help him.

- Shh, - Agnetha asked him to be more restrained and put her index finger to her lips.

- Well, Mr. Vano, could you first briefly tell about yourself, - the second member of the commission asked him.

"There is no bazaar, what is the question, right now," Vano did not hesitate to answer, unlike Agneta, who did not immediately understand why he had uttered the word "bazaar", but soon coped with this incident with honor and dignity.

Vano closed his eyes for a moment, and in a matter of seconds, his whole life flew by in front of him, almost from his birth to these minutes.

He suddenly remembered the story of one of his friends, who returned wounded from the war, that, being seriously wounded and on the verge of death, his whole life mentally, in a matter of minutes, flew before his eyes. Minutes of struggle between life and death.

As if for Wano, as he now imagined, this peculiar exam of his was a war between life and death.

- I was born in a family of employees, my parents worked all their lives and now receive a beggarly pension in my country.

"An impressive start," remarked the third member of the commission, taking off his glasses and placing them neatly on the green velvet tablecloth of his desk.

- It's even worse, - continued Vano, cheered up by the praise of the commission member.

- We do not doubt it, - confirmed the same voice of a member of the commission.

The presiding officer asked with a glance about the correctness of the meeting, to which his colleague blinked his eyes as a sign of consent.

- I confess that at school I was not particularly pleased with my studies, - continued Vano, - but what I liked, I mastered it best of all.

- For example, what did you like at school? asked the second member of the commission.

- Playing football, - without thinking, Vano threw in response and, noticing the surprised looks at each other of the members of the commission, he quickly added in response, - of course, at recess, between lessons.

- And what success have you achieved in this sporting field of yours? the chairman asked.

- He became the champion of the country together with my team, among juniors, - Vano said proudly.

- And how long did you keep playing?

- Before a serious knee injury received immediately after my first championship match, - Vano explained.

A parallel line of his past life surfaced in his mind, along with the one from which he was now presenting episodes to the members of the commission.

- I have a wife and two children. Now I work in one of the leading computer firms in my city, as the head of the security service, - continued Vano.

- How successful, Mr. Vano? - one of the co-chairmen of the commission asked.

"Sufficiently successful," Vano confirmed, "otherwise I would not have been kept there for almost twenty years in this position.

- So why today you left your successful and beloved, as you write in your C-V, work and country, and are now standing here in front of us with your request.

- Mr. presiding, as I pointed out in my petition, which is now before you, I was forced to take this step by the unstable situation in my country and the acute economic crisis, which do not allow normal maintenance for my family and full-fledged living in my homeland.

There was a long pause, the rustle of sheets of papers of the presiding member of the commission lying in the folder was heard.

- Mr. Vano, we have reliable information from senior members of the government of your country, including from a senior leader, about the well-being in your country, including its economic situation, - the chairman concluded, reading one of the papers, - as well as their a request to forcibly send back emigrants from your country to their homeland, and we have no reason not to trust the statements of the leadership of your country, with which we are bound by common agreements, including through the EU. A printed version of these statements is now available to us.

Vano looked at Agnetha in amazement. His pupils dilated and his expression distorted.

- We have no reason to question their statements - continued to explain the other presiding.

Are you sure that their statements are correct? - Vano objected, - in fact, the situation is completely different.

Please check other channels of information, and you will be convinced of the correctness of my arguments about the current state of affairs in our country. They are masters of asking for our deportation, if only to preserve the image of the country, but then let them give the opportunity for a normal life in it, but what they get is neither a normal life in the country, nor the possibility of emigration? Hmm, wow, truly a people's government, do not say anything, die in poverty and hunger - this is their advice offered to us.

- Mr. Vano, you have the right to reside in our country without the right to work for three months. What funds are you going to use to do this? one of the committee members asked.

- The world is not without good people, as you know, - Mr. Co-Chairman. - Vano noted, - and even more so, there are quite a few of them in your country from among my friends who are ready to provide any assistance to me and my family, - Vano went on the offensive, resorting to flattery and praise from fellow citizens of the commission members.

The consideration of the Vano case, which lasted for more than an hour, ended with an unexpected statement and a promise by the presiding member of the commission to consider his issue in more detail, with a promise to announce the final decision on his issue later, through the communication channels indicated in his statement.

When leaving the building of the meeting of the State Emigration Commission of the country of Wano, his parents and Carol hurried to meet him.

- Well, how are you, son? Father Vano hastened to ask.

- Cut off, - interrupted Vano.

- Why? he asked.

- I got a difficult question.

- Which?

- Square trinomial!

- Come on, son, - the father waved his hand, - not giving him the opportunity to finish the well-known anecdote about Petka and Vasily Ivanovich Chapaev, who was preparing Petka for the entrance exam in mathematics.

- They promised to tell the final answer later, father, what will be, will be, and what to do now, - Vano tried to console him, - now I shouldn't hang myself because of them?

- All right, - father said dejectedly, - let's go, mother, in the evening I'll check everything with our friends, - Vano's father tried to console his wife, taking her into the car, - we'll leave the young alone.

For some more time, Vano and Carol walked along the capital streets of an overseas European city, discussing possible scenarios in connection with Vano, the possibility of extending his residence in Carol's homeland.

But soon they had to go about their business. Carol returned home to her family, and Vano went to his work, to his newfound friends.

X

The blue Ferrari deftly meandered along the serpentine road, one of the few remaining green, ecologically clean zones in the city, the entrance to which was additionally limited with one more security patrol post.

- You can pass, batono Bezhan, - a young service officer issued permission, raising a barrier in front of the car.

The car, having driven a few meters, stopped in front of the iron automatically controlled gates, which opened in front of him immediately after the sound signal was given.

- Greetings, Malkhaz, - floated out of the car, addressed to one of the three employees of the lower office security, a young middle-aged man.

- Hello, batono Bezhan, - a polite answer followed.

How are we doing, are you all right?

- Yes, batono Bezhan, we serve approximately.

- Well done! Who was on duty at the office at night?

- Misha.

- Good.

Having parked the car in the front courtyard of a multi-storey office building and exited it, the driver gazed intently in one direction for some time, along which, from tree to tree, along the branches, a small, nimble and fluffy living creature of amazing beauty dexterously and quickly ran across.

- Here, it turns out, we have preserved squirrels too?

- Yes, batono Bezhan, here in the morning they start running early on tree trunks.

- It is necessary, everything is like with people.

- Animals also have their own life, their worries, their own vanity. And at night, for example, from time to time you can hear the howling of animals from the zoo located below.

- Great! We are having fun, that is.

- Yeah.

Next was passing through the glass wide automatic doors to the office building, exchanging greetings with a new young office worker, and traveling in one of two recently replaced new Turkish firm elevators through an automatic turnstile to his office on one of the upper floors of the building.

"Hello, Dali," a healthy and tall fifty-year-old man who entered the hallway to the young secretary threw Gulliver's steps towards his office.

"Hello, batono Bezhan," she answered in a gentle voice, lowering her head slightly.

- As always, bring me coffee, please.

- All right, batono Bezhan.

Turning on both of his work computers, the newly appointed administrator of the company began to review documents and, first of all, reports from the internal security of the office.

Then there were letters from the company's internal correspondence - from managers and other employees of different departments, about the current state of affairs at work.

I had to constantly keep my finger on the pulse so as not to miss any important information about the state of affairs in the company, which at the moment was managed by his longtime friend Irakli Georgievich, the company's chief financier, in the absence of its president Goga Vladimirovich.

The coffee brought in by Dali every morning was distinguished by its special smell and taste, intriguing its taster every day.

The beginning of work in a new position and in a new job always turns out to be stormy and energetic for any person, and doubly so for executives.

Therefore, it was not surprising that all departments of the company were shaken up in connection with the arrival of a new person to the new position of administrator, who dumbfounded employees with a mass of innovations.

"The new broom sweeps well and in a new way," some employees used to say about him in behind-the-scenes gossip.

Employees who did not get along with his strange, in their opinion, innovations, one of whom was the head of the security department of the Vano company, left the office in search of another job, which, due to the current coronavirus pandemic, and, perhaps, without it, too, is not it was easy to find in the capital, and throughout the country too.

- Irakli, hello, - a greeting was heard on the internal phone of the company, - are you at home?

- Yes, Bezhan, but now I have no time, I'm considering important financial documents and contracts, we'll meet later.

- Well, when will it be possible to go up to you?

- I'll call you when I'm free.

- Well, agreed, I just have a lot of questions, I need to talk to you.

- Okay, agreed.

After exhausting and stressful hours at the company, it was decided to take a break at one of the city's restaurants.

- You have a very decent restaurant, Bezhan, and the menu is also excellent.

- Thank you, Irakli, I have only had him for a couple of years, and I must say that in the beginning things were not going very badly for me here, but then, in connection with this crown, you yourself understand.

- Yes, now with this crown it is not sweet anywhere, including in our company too, but this should not be an obstacle for us to work successfully.

- Of course, what I'm talking about.

- The President of our company is very often in touch with me and inquires about our affairs all the time.

You can even say that he manages our company from America remotely, via the Internet.

- Yes, of course, I understand, I hope you are talking about me with him, about my and our innovations.

- Yes, of course, Gogi Vladimirovich is aware of all the cases.

Was there a conversation about my salary too?

- Yes, at the beginning he expressed his objection to this, saying that no one at our work had twelve pieces, but

about then, when I explained to him that they come from your own brought money, then he calmed down a little.

- Well, why, some heads of departments receive, after all, not much less than me.

- I'm telling you about his considerations expressed to me.

- Yes, I understand that he put up with it. In addition, I do a lot for the company and, first of all, in matters of saving its money, improving the quality of its work.

- Yes, but not due to the dismissal of old employees who have been proven by many years of work, Bezhan.

- I didn't fire anyone.

- Many are already on the sidelines saying that it was Vano who became your first victim, and others followed him.

- Vano went abroad, as I know, because he and his family were in debt.

- Bejan, I want you to understand me correctly.

- That's what I'm trying to do, and that's why I'm coordinating all the important issues with you.

- You eliminated the top post, and three of our employees lost their jobs.

- Oh, just think, young and healthy guys will always find a job as a watchman, this is not some kind of position, Irakli. And besides, why was the top post needed when there are these great guys Misha and Alexander, who are responsible for internal security in the company.

- It's in the evening and at night, but during the day it was Vano, wasn't it?

- And in the afternoon, let the girls from the reception contact the lower security if anything, after all, one of the best security services and its employees protect us. But here you have extra money in the company.

- Yes, but when there were our three employees at the lower post, their content was cheaper for us than now, when we pay employees of another city security service.

- But more guarantees of reliability.

- It's hard to argue with you, Bezhan.

- And you do not argue, it is better to taste hot chakhokhbili until it has cooled down. And then, Irakli, our company is actually a limited liability company, and who cares, except for ourselves, what we will do in it.

- But we are still a company accountable to the ministries of finance and economy, whose tax deductions directly depend on our work and financial turnover.

- Exactly, in this area I could be of benefit to our company.

- Uh, no, buddy, stay away from our accounting and all financial affairs and remember, this is your red line that you cannot cross, otherwise ...

- Okay, okay, I understand.

- You have been entrusted with the position of administrator, so take care of this business of yours. Believe me, here you have more than enough work and worries.

- Of course, of course, but what am I talking about, - Bezhan agreed, biting off a decent piece from a hot piece of khachapuri with melted suluguni flowing out of it.

- Try khachapuri, Irakli, while it is hot and let's clink glasses with you with our sacred white national wine.

- Your wine is also excellent, - Irakli Georgievich agreed, sipping a pearl drink from his glass.

- Eh, our homeland is a real paradise, and I don't know a second paradise like our country, - Bezhan noted.

- For us, yes, but now ask the inhabitants of another country.

- Yes, and this is true, it is not for nothing that it is said that each cuckoo praises its nest.

- It is a pity that more could have been done in our country, if not for this coronavirus pandemic, the general stagnation. Only, perhaps, one of our large companies in the country keeps afloat and continues to go with the flow of demand and success.

- Well, why, Heraclius, a lot of good and new things are being done by our new government.

- The best of the best inexhaustible, for our country, - Irakli Georgievich clinked glasses of wine with a glass of his new administrator.

The intermittent restaurant gathering of friends - the leaders of the company lasted almost until the end of the working day.

At the end of the feast, Irakli Georgievich, by inertia, rushed to his wallet, trying to pay the expenses, but his friend immediately stopped him with his hand.

- Irakli, what are you? - Bezhan said touchily, - you are visiting me, in my own restaurant, have you forgotten something?

- Well, well, thank you, then next time the restaurant will be for me, - agreed Irakli Georgievich.

- No, Irakli, and the next time will be again with me.

- Well, then you will go bankrupt, and you will spend all your salary here, - the friend smiled in response.

- The company pays! came the answer with an answering smile.
Get in my Ferrari, I'll take you to work.

- Are you going to drive drunk, Bezhan?

- Oh, just think, I drank a couple of glasses of white.

- Yes, but if the patrol stops?

- I have my own people there, Irakli, and besides, I have a violator.

- But this document does not provide for such violations.

- Sit down, sit down, boldly, otherwise we won't have time by the end of the working day. Irakli, there are still a lot of questions about work that I would like to discuss with you, - suggested a friend, getting out of his car, stopping at the parking lot, in the yard, in front of the building of his company.

"Not today, Bezhan, not all at once," his boss replied. "I'm pretty tired today, and besides, I still have a lot of unfinished business. Thanks again for everything, we'll keep in touch.

- Definitely, - shook hands with his friend Bejan and went, swaying from side to side, to his office.

Barely having coped with the official affairs that remained for the evening, Bezhan managed to finally sober up and returned home late in the evening.

Before he had time to get the keys to the house out of his pocket, behind the metal door he heard the accelerated breathing of his four-legged friend, then squeals and, finally, barking.

"What, my good Eva, what, my dear," the owner of the house stroked the one-year-old brown spaniel, spinning with joy at his feet, rising from time to time on its hind legs and wagging its tail non-stop.

- You and only you love me in the world like no one else.

"Hi, pa," the eighteen-year-old daughter hurried to the meeting, hanging on his neck and hugging him with all her might.

- Hello, daughter, hello, my dear Natia, - the father reciprocated, pressing his daughter to his heart.

- O! Thank God, - the blonde, a woman of average height forty-five years old, who came out to meet her, pleaded, - he finally appeared, was he not dusty?

- You would at least leave the rolling pin in the kitchen, Lela, otherwise you didn't smear yourself entirely with flour, you're also threatening, - my husband remarked, smiling.

- And how else to meet you, you disappear all day at work and God knows where else, but you have nothing to do with your family.

"Come, at least show the kids that you love me," my husband advised, "although you don't need a rolling pin in your hand."

- Walked with your friends again?

- I don't have boyfriends and girlfriends either, unlike you, I only have real friends, and then, where did you get that from?

- From you again carries, Bezhan.

- From you, by the way, too, how many times I asked you not to smoke at home, and even with children, well, what example are you setting for them, Lela?

- Well, much better than you.

- Okay, stop arguing, or I'll change my mind about giving you my surprise.

Lela seemed to be restrained by the promise expressed from the lips of her husband.

"Okay, but we also have a surprise for you," she agreed and dutifully returned to the kitchen.

"Dad, mom, hurry up to my room, Leah is calling on Skype from Paris," the voice of a twenty-five-year-old son was heard from the next room.

Soon the whole family was in touch with the owner's twenty-two-year-old daughter.

- Pa, ma, get acquainted, - Leah suggested, - this is my second family already, - the girl introduced the members of her new family with the help of a video eye.

- This is Olivier - my fiancé, and these are his parents Philip and Eliza, or Alice as we call her.

- Bonjour, - almost in one voice, Skype greetings from a distant country sounded.

"Bonjour," everyone answered in unison in a joyful voice, except for the owner of the room.

Bejan's heart skipped a beat.

- What's wrong with you, pa? - I heard the voice of my daughter, - are you not glad to see and hear us?

The silence continued for some time, until Lela nudged her husband, calling him to a response from her second family.

"Hello, daughter, of course, I'm glad, I greet you, my dears," Lela's husband barely stuttered, "but all this is just for me, so unexpected that ...

- Why suddenly, pa, I told you and your mother about Olivier? the daughter recalled.

- Yes, but I knew that you were friends, but the fact that things would take such a turn so quickly, I did not expect. You never know, at your age I also had many girlfriends and no less admirers, but to my great regret, I pecked at your mother's many years of rejection and eventually got caught on this. If I knew then, what would it turn out to be? - Bezhana tried to translate his confusion into a humorous way, for which he subsequently received a strong kick in the side from his wife.

- Don't listen to him, baby. Don't take it seriously.

- Yes, but how does it happen, daughter, without a wedding and without the consent of the parents?

- And we decided to unite our destinies forever, got together and live with Olivier's parents, and we will play a wedding later, these are all formalities, pa, - Leah tried to explain.

- In our country, such an act is called differently, daughter, you know?

- So it is with you, and with us it is almost an accepted norm.

- Since when did a foreign country become your own, and your own only ours?

- Since I met Olivier and when I started a relationship with him. But this did not happen all at once, but gradually.

- What did you trade your homeland for, Leah, daughter?

- Yes, I didn't change anything that a person can't have a second homeland, pa? I love Olivier very much and I can't live without him, even kill me. He is the only son of his parents, who are also doctors, and they love him madly and have already fallen in love with me. Our relationship has been going on for five years now.

- I understand you, daughter, your mother also confessed her love to me in the same way, how can one not understand.

Bejan received a second strong kick in the side from his wife.

"Very good, my daughter, good is good," Lela welcomed her daughter's decision in broken English and, waving affably to the members of the French family, continued sweet conversations with them, learning the details that interested her.

- Well, well, daughter, since you decided so without my consent, in this case I find myself superfluous in your conversation and leave without interfering with your communication.

- Well, that's very good, Bezhan, go rest, and we'll chat here

I still have a lot to eat without you, - suggested Lela, - if you want to have dinner, you will find everything you need in the kitchen, on the table, stove and in the refrigerator.

- Fire and ice, and block, the whole arsenal for pleasures and contrasting exotic sensations, - Bezhan suddenly thought, and, waving his hand at his daughter-in-law and his relatives watching them through the computer monitor, retired to his room.

- What kind of concert did you do in front of our new relatives, Bezhan? The wife later complained to her husband.

- Lela, don't start again, I beg you. It just came as a complete surprise to me, that's all.

- What a surprise, didn't I tell you about their relationship. Don't you remember? That's why I tell you that you are absolutely unaware of the affairs that are happening in your family.

- What are you doing for me?

- But then, do not be surprised and do not mind the surprises that lie in wait for you, from time to time in your house.

- Yeah, from time to time?

"But there's another surprise waiting for you today."

- What - another one? Oh god, what else? Bejan pleaded.

"But first, I expect the surprise you promised me.

"Look, he remembers," Lela's husband muttered under his breath.

- Still, if they weren't from you, then what was the use of you?

"Lela, stop inciting me right now, otherwise you won't get any surprises from me," the husband threatened.

- Oh, you are my dear and beloved, you know how much and passionately I love you, - as always, Lela's intuition did not fail, and this time she managed to resort to it and kiss her Gulliver, rising on her toes.

Bejan melted a little.

- Are you serious? he asked her, looking intently into her eyes.

"Well, of course, my Gulliver," Lela confirmed, adding additional kisses to him in dessert. Better tell me, in which pocket do you have this surprise for me? A smile spread across Lela's face.

- Do you promise to be a polite and loving wife today? Bejan insured.

- Well, of course, but when I am different in relation to you, my baby elephant? Lela continued to stick to her husband.

- In the left inner pocket of the jacket, - Lela pulled out information from her husband.

Soon, Bezhan heard a joyful squeal and a cry from his wife from the hallway. Joyfully holding in her hands five green bills of the highest denomination, she hurried to hang on her husband's neck.

- Here you go, woman, - a thought flashed through his mind.

- Mom, what happened to you, why are you screaming like that, didn't you fall or hurt yourself? - her adult daughter, who ran out with her dog Eva, asked in a frightened voice.

"No, daughter, look what a surprise your dad gave us," Lela squealed happily, having managed to get off her husband's neck and showing her daughter the reason for her joy.

- By the day of victory, perhaps? concluded the daughter, smiling.

- Laces, calm down, you finally scream in unison, - the son who left his room threw his parents indignantly, - your screams are heard even under my headphones. So you will scare away all our neighbors, and God forbid one of them decides to call a patrol.

- Well, son, let's not do it anymore, - Lela promised, still by inertia being under the emotions received from her husband's surprise.

- We also have a surprise for you, dad, - their youngest daughter tried to interrupt the joyful mood of her parents.

- What, another surprise? - Bezhan was frightened, - maybe that's enough for today?

"Come on, pa," the father's daughter took her father's hand and dragged him into another room.

- Who else is this? - Bezhan was indignant with dilated pupils when he saw a black puppy - a mongrel.

- And this is Adam for our Eve, - Natia explained, - the guys in the yard wanted to kill him, throwing stones at him, and I took pity on him and decided to save him from them, - look how cute he is, pa.

- Very cute, there are simply no words, daughter, I have enough two-legged animals at home, and now I have to breed four-legged ones at home.

"Pa, well, look how cute he is," the daughter of her father urged, clutching the tenderly whining black puppy to her chest.

“Have you all gone crazy here in my absence,” the owner of the house yelled. And so it went and away, waves of female charm, requests and prayers covered Bezhan's anger one after another.

And it must be said that far from the last role was assigned to Eva, who was clearly attached to her new ward.

“Well, look how Eva asks you about it,” Natia suggested, “at least take pity on her, she’s bored alone in our house, she doesn’t even have anyone to talk to.

- Yes, and you? - the strong man's voice was indignant.

- And why do we, pa, a man needs a man, and a dog needs a dog, - the daughter explained, - think, let him live with Eva for a while, and then we will take them both to the dacha.

- We already have Rex there, and that's enough, there is someone to guard. He still can't find a common language with Eve, and now Adam is also here.

And where will he live with us, okay?

- Temporarily, in Leah's room, - Natia explained, - and then we will send him to our country house. After all, if we put him out on the street now, the bad guys will kill him - don't you feel sorry for him.

On TV at that time there was a famous artistic

th film “Father of a Soldier”, and at this point in the family showdown, a fragment was shown when the father of a soldier, pointing in the direction of a standing little boy, turned to the commander of the tank crew - Here is a German boy, go shoot him.

- What am I, a fascist, or something, - sounded in response.

- Are you a fascist, Bezhan? Lela asked in surprise.

- Ay, do what and as you like, - the owner of the house waved his hand, - anyway, I can't live with you, - and retired to his room.

Later, plunging into the realm of sleep, Bezhan felt from his back a light female body pressed against him.

Grasping her husband's shoulders with her right arm, she whispered softly into his ear.

- And now, my beloved, the most important surprise, the crown of everything, if you want, can we move to the reconciliation room?

In response, there was a faint, barely audible whining, very similar to a dog's.

So, being a dog in a dream, he denied his girlfriend the dog in her quivering desire for sacred communication.

XI

It seemed that the long trill of telephone beeps turned into a long song of wild forest birds unknown to the village.

Moreover, as if different from each other, the calls, hungry and missing the answers of their interlocutors, began to talk to each other as if.

- Well, where are you so far, - the indignant protest in a male voice grumbled mentally, - did you all die at once, or what?

"Hello, the third one is listening to you," a gentle voice of a young girl was finally heard, as if at the last dying second, refusing a death sentence.

- Hello, I'm disturbing you, from the facility under your control, our office is opening.

- What are the object numbers.

- Thirty-three zero thirty and twelve zero twelve.

- Your name.

- Malkhaz.

- I wish you a peaceful day, Malkhaz.

"And you too," came the reply.

Hmm, good wishes, different from the case, - a thought flashed, - you can't say anything. Well, we will get together, nothing can be done, circumstances sometimes rule over us.

Having taken with him a selected bunch of keys, a mobile phone and a proxy card, to pass through the turnstiles of the upper and lower floors, the sleepy office watchman reluctantly set off on his first morning work trip.

It was necessary to open the office from its lower entrance and from the upper floors.

- Hello, Tamaz, - the voice of his colleague from the lower office, invited from a special one of the city's security companies, greeted.

- Hello, Misha, what is gloomy in the morning? asked a colleague, smiling.

- You ask such questions that it is simply inconvenient to answer, - a colleague recalled the well-known words of one of the most famous actors of the notorious movie. - As if you don't know why a dog bites in life.

- As from what, from the life of a dog, of course.

- No, from raspberry, not from dog.

- And when did dogs like raspberries? Tamaz was surprised, not immediately understanding his colleague's joke.

- That's it.

- Today, what is our daily routine, Misha.

- As always, on Saturdays there is a shortened day, so I open the office, although I would have to do it without it, since the readings of the water meter must be taken both here and upstairs.

- Yes, as they say, there was no sadness ...

- Well, yes, they, our superiors, have nothing more to do than to give us new stupid assignments.

- It would be better if they added a little salary to you, otherwise ...

- Oh, stop it, Tamaz, for God's sake, do not rash, as they say, salt on the wound. It is better to complain about this to your superiors, who only strive to catch you at least on some sins in order to keep you from your salary.

- Yes, don't say, they, not only do they have six hundred lari for each of the three of us who were on duty here, transferred from your company, they also suck blood from us and constantly tease us on the radio and are not lazy at night, several once they come in cars and check us.

- It's better to let them give an increase in salary so that they go by taxi, otherwise your children's bicycle is already worn out and aged.

- Don't talk, listen, it's good that at least he helped me in these difficult quarantine days and under curfew. Here is Grigory, for example, to our general - it's good, because he lives nearby and gets here on foot. But it is harder for Malkhaz to get from the other end of the city, and therefore we switched to a two-shift work schedule. What else is left to do?

- Yes, such is life, and all the time you have to adapt to it. Well Tamaz, I went upstairs to bypass the office, turn on the lighting along the corridors and take readings from the upper water meter.

- Well, as they say, with God, - the colleague admonished.

- With God, we will meet more than once, these two days together, after all, we are on duty.

- Yep, exactly.

One of the new large passenger elevators, made in Turkey with a capacity of 1,000 kilograms and designed for up to thirteen passengers, also seemed to be subject to quarantine restrictions, as signs were posted at the entrance to each floor of the office to limit the number of masked passengers to no more than four people.

But on the other hand, it was a pleasure to ride it, in comparison with the old, worn out and amortized for a long time, Soviet elevators.

The new high-speed cabins of both the company's elevators, both large and small, rushed silently and with a breeze through the vertical expanses of the office.

Entering through the upper entrance to the office, on the eighth floor, on the parapet of one of the entrance bridges, a metal box was installed with a lockable top flap.

Opening this lid again and taking the morning measurements of the water meter, the watchman noticed a hive of wild wasps. It was interesting to observe how these insects begin the morning of their working day, which is in many ways similar to a human one.

But, like nature and its inhabitants, as you know, they rarely forgive mistakes, and the instinct of self-preservation and protection of their offspring is highly developed among its inhabitants.

Carried away by their observations, the inquisitive eyes of the watchman did not notice how the alarm signal was announced at lightning speed among wild insects, the most courageous individuals flew around the victim in a swarm and began to attack him.

Neither involuntary chaotic waves of both hands, nor semi-loud cries for help, and not even an urgent flight without looking back from the scene, saved the victim from a pair of striking bites that fell on both hands.

“Damn you,” the man’s voice was indignant, “I didn’t wish you anything bad, did you?” What am I to do now, huh? And, as luck would have it, none of the employees are in the office to ask for help.

I had to go down the elevator to the first floor in search of help to my colleague Tamaz, who, not at a loss, hurried to get a sting from both bites with a knife, squeeze out some blood and pour green paint on the wounds.

- Thank you, dear, - thanked the victim of the savior.

- Please, Misha, why are we to save and rescue each other, - consoled his colleague.

- If they are not okay, these meter readings, both day and night, - Mikhail complained.

No, it seems that wasps are less aggressive at night under the rays of a mobile phone flashlight.

“Because they sleep,” Tamaz explained.

- And why should we smash their hives, Misha, - Tamaz answered. - stay on duty if you want here for a while, and I'll go upstairs and with this knife I'll smash them to hell at home, - he suggested.

- No, it's not necessary, - Malkhaz answered after some thought - firstly, you are not supposed to leave your post, and then, what is it like to destroy other people's families? It's not human somehow.

- Are you serious? You are our great humanist.

- The only thing is that I did not have time to take the readings of the water meter, this worries me, but nothing, I will write from myself, subject to the approximate difference from the measurements of the past days.

- Well, as you know, look, and if anything, I'm here, next to you, - Tamaz reassured his colleague.

Soon, a specialist looking after aquarium fish swooped into the office.

- What's the matter with you, Mikhail, - he asked when he saw the dejected face of the guard and the stains on the hands of both hands.

- Gangster bullets, Otar, - laughed off Mikhail, who began to artistically describe what happened to him.

- And I've brought you new fish, - the fish specialist hastened to please his friends, - let's go, I'll show you how beautiful they are.

Multi-colored aquarium fish of different sizes willingly jumped out of a special net of a fish farmer who skillfully caught them and, once in spacious aquariums, began to behave very cautiously.

They looked closely at absolutely everything, getting used not only to the expanses of their new habitat, but also to the fish swimming nearby, and also carefully examined their old relatives.

“Let them get used to each other for now,” the fish specialist admonished the office watchman, “and tell Alexander too that they don’t need to pour a lot of food. Because, firstly, the water is spoiled by food, and often you have to change it, and then, the more they eat, naturally, the more they emit from themselves ... you know?”

- Yes, of course! Michael agreed.

- Today and tomorrow you are on duty or Alexander?

- No, I, Sandro, is leaving on Monday.

- Why am I asking, now I need to urgently go to another facility, and then I will probably come back, I want to wash the aquarium filters.

- What, Otar, did you get so rich that you began to travel around the objects by taxi?

- No, what are you, just a friend promised to call me, call me any minute.

The conversation was interrupted by a long ringing on the mobile phone.

- Yes, Maka, what happened? Mikhail asked.

- Nothing special, I just felt anxiety for you, so I called you. Are you all right?

- Yes, why?

- Nothing, a neighbor called from the village, said that the electric pump that pumped water from the well had flown.

- Oh, Lord, how many times I taught them how to use it correctly, and could not teach them, - Mikhail complained.

- What will happen now, after all, soon we need to go to the village for the summer holidays, but how will we be there now without water? the wife complained.

- How-how, but as we used to be, so we will be now, Maka, until we fix the pump or buy a new one, - Mikhail explained.

- More expenses? We haven't paid off all the old debts yet.

- So what to do? What is the output?

- Okay, come home, then we'll talk. Just call, before leaving, I will say that I will need to buy more for the house.

- Good.

The lights suddenly went out in the office. In response, for some reason, the electricity generator installed in the basement under the first lower floor did not turn on.

Batteries for temporary power to computers squealed unanimously across the floors, keeping them working for a certain period of time.

An immediate call was made to the electrician at the Enveri office.

- All right, Misha, I'll call the batono Bezhan now and put him up to date.

- Well, dear, tell me later, please, the answer. What to do now, eh, - Mikhail got excited, - well, I had a day.

- Hello, colleague, how are you? - I heard on the phone.

- Hi, Sandro, here I have a whole black streak today, - Mikhail complained.

- What's happened?
- Firstly, my fears about the damned wild wasps that bit me in the morning almost half to death were justified.
- But that's nothing.
- What else?
- The wife called, in the village an electric pump barked, pumping drinking water from a well.
- Auf, and what are those pen?
- You'll have to buy a new one. But that's not all.
- Stop scaring me.
- In the office, the light went out, on all floors the power supplies of computers hummed with one voice.
- Well, that's how they should behave in such cases in principle. Call Enveri and tell him about it.
- I called already, I'm waiting for a response from the authorities.
- I wonder why the generator didn't work.
- I do not know. Oh, I'm sorry, Sandro, they call me, by internal and city phone.
- Yes, yes, go, just tell me later how things are going for you there.
- Enveri, I'm listening to you, how are you, what have you learned?
- Nothing in principle, I called Bezhan and told him about what had happened.
- And what is he?
- He answered that the lights went out in many areas of the city and that this was the business of the power supply services and that there was nothing we could do about it.
- And what should I do now?
- Nothing, sit and wait.
- Good.

This position persisted in the office for several more hours.
 Light was given only in the evening.
 But Mikhail could not turn on the working computer shared with Alexander, or rather, enter the Internet through it.
 To communicate with the outside world from the company's office closed from the inside, Mikhail had only a telephone.
 On the second day of duty, on Sunday morning, employees of the administration of system support appeared in the office. A little later, Bezhan himself came to the office to pick them up.
 After a short trial, the obvious was found out that all the company's servers "flew" and became completely unusable.

- What do you have there, Bezhan? - the financial director of the company asked, - the president of our company calls from abroad and is also interested.

- The light went out yesterday for a long time, and for some reason the safety generator did not turn on, as a result, all our servers burned out and became unusable.

- What? - I heard the piercing cry of the financial director. - This is our end, Bezhan, do you understand? This is a disaster and we are all covered! Find the culprits and report, I'll be in the company soon.

- All right, Irakli.

Soon, an extended meeting gathered in the main "rally room" of the company, at which the reasons for what had happened were considered.

After a detailed inspection of all the vital energy components of the office, it turned out that a special tank supplying the generator with fuel had been stolen in excess of the norm, which did not allow the generator to work.

And they broke the stick, as always, at the lowest link, according to the principle - the switchman is always guilty, instructing him to write a letter of resignation from work, from Monday next week.

Saddened, Mikhail finished his last day of work as a watchman in a company in which he had been working on a beggarly salary for more than ten years.

Late in the evening, a call rang through the mobile Internet, waking Mikhail, who had taken a nap from grief, and took him almost by surprise.

- Hello, brother-in-law, how is life young? the man's voice asked.

- Hello, Vano, what fate? Michael answered through a dream.

- What is so sad, Misha?

- No, nothing, just like that.

- Slept perhaps?

Yes, I took a nap.

- There, when I was your boss, I didn't let you sleep, and now I don't let you, even hundreds of thousands of kilometers from you, right?

Yes, they don't choose leaders.

- How are you, how is Alexander, guys?

- Nothing, everyone seems to be alive and well.

- What's new with you, Misha?

- We have an emergency, Vano, - Mikhail complained.

- What's happened?

Mikhail briefly and in detail told his former boss and brother-in-law about what had happened and lamented that after him, he, along with Alexander, were left without his protection and cover, and now completely different people control their destinies.

- Oh, I shook their soul, - Vano swore in response. - Do not sign anything, you hear, I will show them Kuz'kin's mother, and who I am too. Apparently, they have studied me poorly for fifteen years. I really left the city and left our work not of my own free will, but I still have my people, and I'll sort everything out. Misha, don't

worry, most importantly, don't write any statements and don't sign any papers, do you hear?

- Yes, Vano, I hear, but what can you do from there?

- What? You will know about it soon.

- They already have Alexander and I at gunpoint for a long time and are looking for good reasons to throw us out of work and bring their people to our place, you understand this very well, Vano?

- Of course, Misha. What if they didn't do the same in my case? They kicked me out of work according to a pre-conceived, planned and then implemented scenario, and in my place they brought this asshole Merab, who knows nothing and can't connect a with b. Nothing, we will soon figure it out and return everything to its place, as it was.

- No need, Vano, don't worry, I've already made some plans for the future. I'll go to my place. To my village, to my own house, and there I will work on the housework. Fortunately, God is merciful and will not leave me alone with problems, but let those who made it worry about their wrong decision. God is my witness that in this particular case I am not guilty.

- And the children, what kind of education will you give them in the countryside? Have you thought about them?

- What else can I do?

- I tell you, do not write any statements and do not sign anything. I'll take care of everything, okay? Give me some time.

- Good, Vano, good.

Oh, Michael agreed.

How did he still have the feeling that something was wrong in our office, - Mikhail was surprised.

And he involuntarily remembered his last night call, when he called at three in the morning and, waking him up, asked him to go into the office of one of the directors of the company and check the condition of the aquarium there, in which colorful fish swam, brought by the fish specialist Otari.

Arriving at the place, Misha discovered a through diagonal crack in the thick windshield of the aquarium, through which water was slowly but surely leaking.

After a short time, the aquarium would be completely empty of water, and the beautiful fish, the cost of which ranged from fifty to one hundred lari and more each, were threatened with imminent death.

Then Mikhail, calling Otari back, quickly reacted to the situation and, having previously filled two plastic buckets released from garbage plastic bags, filled them with drinking water from the tap and transplanted all the fish into them until morning.

And in the morning, Otari, together with his friend, also a fish specialist, came with new glasses and quickly eliminated the damage to the aquarium.

This is how employees should be, cordial and sincere, in every company, whose soul hurts even when they leave work, Mikhail convinced himself.

Soon he collapsed back into his computer chair and drifted off into his recently interrupted dreams.

XII

The ringing of bells from the church, built on a hill located near the office, washed away all traces of an anxious, nighttime sleep that lasted shorter than usual.

Long-familiar feelings, shimmering in a rainbow of charming and voluptuous sensations, carried away a sleeping person into a completely different world, into the realm of extraterrestrial love and prosperity.

But the morning bell ringing had a different effect on each of the townspeople, awakening some, causing a feeling of regret in others, and lulling others even more and tying them to sleep.

For the latter, the incessant ringing of the alarm clock served as a great intimidation and a strict command to interrupt sleep and get up as soon as possible. And the only salvation from the death of the alarm clock was the mute button.

- It turns out that for me the ringing of love is not worse than the ringing of a strict and obligatory one? – a thought suddenly flashed. Well, at least you would have delayed your call for a few minutes, - a reproach was thrown at the alarm clock.

“Even on Sunday you can’t sleep like a human being,” a plaintive male voice rose from a wooden couch.

The morning report had to be typed into the computer and sent to the chief, while the bells were still ringing.

“All normal God-loving people are in church today, but I have to hang around here for a whole week both on Saturday and Sunday,” the male voice continued to complain.

- And they themselves do not go to church these days, and they do not allow others to go there. As if, as in that famous fairy tale:

- Geese, geese,

- Ha, ha, ha.

- Do you want to eat?

- Yes Yes Yes.

- Well, fly home.

- We are not allowed.

- Why?

- The gray wolf under the mountain does not let us go home.

How many wisdoms are in the fairy tales of our childhood, - a male voice admired, remembering, by the way, the necessary fairy tale.

- Do not make excuses better, - an inner voice immediately objected to him, - after all, you also have another, non-working week, on which your shift Michael is on duty.

"That's right," the man's voice agreed.

- That's it. After all, it has been said - for six days, mind your own business, and the seventh day is mine, God's.

"Lord, forgive me a sinner," the voice repented.

The printed sheet of paper was folded into four equal parts and neatly torn into separate parts, on one of which was sketched a quatrain that came to mind:

The best time

I spent on earth

There was time spent in the Church,

I couldn't have been better anywhere else!

The lines poured out from the soul immersed him for a while in the memories of the past life of an active parishioner, which gave him the most valuable thing that a believer in the world could wish for.

- The true paradise on earth is life in a church or in a monastery, in union with God! - poured out in self-recognition in his mind - and the loss of this paradise, excommunication from the life-giving source of life, from everything good in the world, and salvation in it, too, as in Noah's Ark.

- Sandro, have you ever thought about the question of why Noah took more animals into his ark than people? - were interrupted by reflections in a voice from an unexpectedly ringing call on the mobile.

- Misha, you are just like a clairvoyant, how did you know what I was thinking about the church topic?

- Uh ... uh, - Mikhail drawled, - yes, every sane person has to deal with this topic in our daily life all the time.

And you don't have to go far beyond this, that neither the situation in our today's life, any of it willy-nilly pushes you to the episodes described in the book of life. For example, when our family lived in the village prosperously thanks to my father, the kingdom of heaven be upon him, then our house was constantly full of guests, and now no one needs me, a poor and impoverished villager, except for Him. The only living creature that loves me, appreciates and visits me is the neighbor's dog.

- And then, probably, because you feed her?

- I don't think so, since she can feed herself with her master.

- And what did you then tied her to yourself?

- And the devil knows, - there was a short pause, - it may be that I talk to her about many things.

- About what?

- Well, about our vain and dog life, and also about how heavy the "Monomakh's hat" is sometimes.

- Well, you give, - Alexander laughed.

The hero of the classic spoke with a horse when there was no one to listen to him, and you found a dog as your interlocutor.

- Yes, and what is more important and valuable, she listens more than she speaks.

- How does he say it? Alexander chuckled.

- Howl, bark, sometimes gives a paw, imagine.

- Well, you give, Misha. Will you work tomorrow, I hope, in the evening?

- And how, after all, my weekly watch begins.

- Yes, Fima and Raisa from Israel called on Skype yesterday.

- So what?

- They say that they are already talking about free vaccination with Astra-Zeneca and after it, residents will be issued the so-called Q-R code passports, allowing entry to any country.

- Dear mother, what will happen if they come to visit us again, again it means we will hit our face in the dirt and tarnish our reputation for elite hospitality.

- There's nothing you can do, Mikhail, you can't tell them not to come, we will save up money for their arrival so as not to lose face, as you put it.

lysya.

- Eh money, money, dear mother.

- This is said about the Volga River, Mikhail.

- I know.

- What are you doing there in the morning?

- I'm idle!

- I know, you can't send one to the village.

- Yeah, as if I lack my wife and mother in the controllers, so now you are added to this list. Better tell me what's in our office?

- Silence, peace and quiet for now, but I think that this is not for long. You know, all the main adventures in our office take place during my duty.

- Yes, of course, but this is fate, Sandro, and, as they say, you can't run away from it anywhere.

- Yes, they are already calling on the intercom, the guests have probably come.

- Who wants to go to work on Sundays, I wonder?

- I'll take a look now. Oh, Misha, it was the programmers who came from the fourth floor, I'm sorry, I ran to open the door for them, and then to remove the alarm from this floor.

- Hello, - a young tall girl of about thirty hurried to open a massive black steel door, working on a special proxy card, at the door.

"Hello," Alexander said in surprise.

- I'm Ketii, a programmer, your new employee, didn't they write to you by internal mail circular about our arrival today?

- Yes, no, they wrote, - Alexander recalled the letter called by the thin tall blonde, - about you and the second ...

- Nutsiko.

- Yes, yes, come on.

She's a little late and will come soon too.

- Come on, I'll accompany you.

In the elevator, during its movement from the seventh to the fourth floor, Keti managed to preen herself in the mirror and exchange smiles with Alexander. After that, as if a little embarrassed, she shyly followed the office watchman to her work room, located at the very end of the long corridor of the building.

- At one time I was also a programmer, Katie, - Alexander tried to remove the tense pause, - and I must say that I was pretty good.

- Where did you work? - the girl was amused.

- At the Academy of Sciences. Rather, in one of his institutes.

- Yes ... huh? Katie was surprised.

- Imagine, and now here's the watchman. - Doctor of Sciences - a watchman, - now Alexander was amused.

- How so?

"Times rule, daughter, not kings, as they rightly say. But still, old ideas and unfinished tasks haunt me and remind me of myself from time to time. So I'll probably take advantage of your favor, and if you let me, I'll steal some time from you about how to solve my mathematical problems in programming.

- With pleasure I will help, than I can, Alexander, - all the same, while Nutsiko is delayed.

The conversation about possible ways to solve some mathematical problems in modern programming languages lasted a little more than half an hour, until the arrival of the second programmer Nutsiko, a plump short girl a little older than Katya.

- Yes, no one solves such problems in Fortran now, but in "sea plus plus" a modern programming language, but in your case, I think the "matlab" language is better suited for solving your mathematical problems - isn't it, Nutsiko?

- Probably, - although I did not have time to get up to speed, - the second programmer threw in surprise.

- Thank you, girls, - Alexander dutifully thanked, - although I want to warn you that I also know a lot of programming life hacks and I think that I will also be useful to you.

- Oh, really, Nutsiko, - Keti threw cheerfully, - you know, we talked with Alexander on our topics of programmers, and he turned out to be a very interesting and omniscient interlocutor.

- No doubt, - smiling, agreed Nutsiko.

- And I will look for these subroutines for solving your dynamic tasks, Alexander, and I will inform you later via instant messenger or other

communication channels. We're colleagues now, aren't we? Katie threw at the back of the departing guard.

- Okay, Katie, agreed.

In his workroom, Alexander was waiting for a message from his old boss at work via Facebook messenger.

- Hi, Alexander, how are you, what's new with you?

- Hello, Vano, - Alexander said happily.

- Well, how did the new vests from Bejan's batono, with the inscription "security" fit you?

- Wow, how did you know about this, Vano?

- You know, I have my people left everywhere, from whom I constantly receive information about what is happening in our office.

- From Lasha and Merab, probably? - a thought flashed through my head.

Is he showing off again?

- Who?

- Batono Bejan.

- No, it seems, although some of his orders, to be honest, surprise us, not to mention more.

- Probably, most of all it is night walks along the dark corridors of the office with the lights turned off everywhere?

- Do you know about that too? Alexander chuckled.

- I tell you that you need to get rid of him in time, otherwise he will bring you there to white heat. This corridor light is like a fly on an elephant, Sandro, you understand very well, don't you? There, apparently, someone installed mini-miners for the extraction of cryptocurrencies, they consume the lion's share of electricity, and you and other employees of the company pay for it. Just look, this is between us, and no one should know about it.

- Yes, for God's sake, Vano. Although for today

no one will hide anything from whom. As my father used to say, there are no bad ones today.

I, like many employees of our company, I think, are aware of all this, but our company operates as a limited liability company and a private enterprise, what can you say to whom? Seven troubles, as they say, one answer from them, do not like it, write a statement and leave. Haven't you been smoked out like that?

- We'll see who smoked whom, we'll see, our most important president of the company will return, and as I told you earlier, bring him a letter signed by all our old employees, dictated by me, and then we'll see who will overcome whom.

- All right, Wano, all right. Just don't worry, and we will do everything as you tell us, although, to be honest, I don't believe in the success of such an enterprise, and this business won't work here without you, you know.

I'll be there soon too, don't worry.

A call on a mobile phone suddenly interrupted the conversation of old employees.

- Sandro, today you are on duty in the office or Mikhail.

- I, batono Bezhan, - Alexander rapped out almost at attention.

- In the courtyard of the first floor, large houseplants were brought in flower girls. Go downstairs and help the workers there arrange them according to the plan that I sent you via the Internet.

- All right, batono Bezhan, - Alexander dutifully said, hastening to follow the instructions of his new boss.

Most of the day was spent arranging various indoor plants brought by three open trucks, placed mainly along the corridors of the building and in the reception room of the company president's office.

Having had a hasty dinner in front of the computer, Alexander began to look through the message feed of the top five Internet sites of interest to him.

- Eh, what could be better in life than doing what you love, - a thought suddenly flashed through my head, - especially, accompanied by the romantic music of a symphony orchestra with leading scores of violin, flute and piano. - If, here it is, a real paradise - when you drown in your favorite musical melody, - Alexander burst out of his chest.

- And what is paradise for you, Thea? - Alexander hurried to ask his new evening interlocutor on the messenger.

- Paradise is where you feel good! Thea answered without hesitation.

- Do you feel good there?

- Yes, even very much, only the only thing is that anxiety for my family weighs me down, but so, what have our country been turned into?

- Who?

- You.

- And what about us, probably, I wanted to say - your rulers?

- Rulers, hmm, don't you choose them? However, you deserve them.

- Leave, for God's sake, as a little child you argue, who asks us, the people, he is only to manage them.

After all, she herself escaped from our country in time, and what will happen to her if everyone runs away like you, who will get her?

- I'm already getting it, every now and then I hear on the news that all big business, including energy, as well as most of the land plots of our country, are in the hands of foreigners. And it's better to work for them not with us, but abroad, in a country much more comfortable than ours.

- You, too, as far as I know, are not sweet, constant rallies and demonstrations, as well as brutal reprisals against protesting demonstrators.

"We have different measurements and different scales," Thea explained.

"Naturally," Alexander agreed. - For me personally, paradise is being close to a loved one.

"Then why aren't you by his side?" It turns out that you, like many of us, unconsciously avoid our paradise?

- You know why?

- No, I do not know. I know only one thing, that love in the world is above all.

- After all, love can also be different, Thea, love is earthly and heavenly.

- Love is only one, heavenly, another thing is that sometimes it descends to the ground and knocks on the doors of the soul and heart of every person in the hope that at least someone will open the door for her and let her into his heart. And this is only so that our souls do not completely petrify.

- Yes, but, unfortunately, it often happens as the great classic wrote about it: we love those who do not love us, and we persecute those who are in love with us.

- Are you talking about yourself?

- But about you too.

- Again, our love develops into disputes that tire and burden me so much. We can't change anything now. You say that the same blood flows in our veins, and so, if you are stubborn, then I am doubly stubborn and I am not going to follow your lead all the time.

- Recalcitrant and proud!

- Free!

So you can lose everything you have.

But I will keep my freedom.

- With a character like yours, do you think there was a future for our relationship, even if they had developed?

- At first, yes, but my heart broken by you opened my eyes.

- This is a damned feminization, if it wasn't okay, who just invented it and why?

- Smart and normal people, otherwise all the men would have killed each other long ago, and the world would cease to exist.

- How do you like to talk about equality, especially when you look down on us and are afraid of losing your exalted position, while forgetting that God created a woman for a man, and not vice versa, and therefore you must follow them, but not vice versa.

Esl

and you are so righteous and just and defend your equality so zealously, why retire five years before us, huh? Where is the logic here, even in this one small example of all the other numerous ones.

"And you will never understand this until you, like us, begin to give birth in agony and suffering.

- It turns out that the dog is biting ...

"Yes, yes, even if that's why," came the reply.

- It turns out that Bernard Shaw was right when he wrote that women are brilliant in love, but otherwise ...

- This he wrote off from his wife and generalized at the same time the sex of mankind.

“God, it’s impossible to win an argument with you.

“Have you heard for the first time that you can’t argue with women, there’s no point. The soul of a woman cannot be fully understood and cannot be measured with a common yardstick, a woman must be loved and believed in,” Tea rewrote the well-known saying of Tyutcheva.

- Oh, how good it was for me until I knew you, - followed after a long pause.

- Do not get me so that I do not touch you.

- Predator and stealer of my heart. Thief, give me back my heart.

The emoji popped up in response.

“If you are so smart and all-powerful, then teach me how to tear you out of my heart.”

- Get yourself another woman. Haven't you heard that a wedge needs to be knocked out with a wedge?

- I tried, all to no avail, time passes, and I again return to normal, that is, to you.

- Fatal love, it seems?

- It seems that this is how she comes to a person in a completely different color and mask. And it is absolutely at the wrong time when a person is not ready for it and does not recognize it. And its knowledge comes only later, later, when as a rule it is already too late.

So where do you think the exit is?

- In a relationship with you, I already think less and feel more and more.

- Where is your logic and rationality, sensualist? Tea asked.

- In a dispute between reason and feeling, the latter always wins, haven't you heard?

“Looks like we switched roles a long time ago?”

- Looks like maybe, I just don't know why. But I am always overcome by a desire to pour out my soul before you, to share my thoughts.

- Thoughts of the soul?

- Yes, but what, I haven't heard that not only the mind, but also the soul has its own thoughts, and that they are much more trenchant than their fellow tribesmen in terms of reason.

- No, but I guessed about it.

- You know, all my women converged in you, at different points in time I feel you differently, and therefore you are everything to me - a wife, and a sister, and a mother, and a daughter, and a relative, and ...

- Go on, go on ... God, what a horror. Have you tried going to a psychiatrist for help?

- No, you are my psychiatrist and you are my doctor and medicine, a person needs a person ...

- For what?
- For the soul, first of all.
- Well, different people have different needs in people.
- Send me, please, a couple of any of your new photos.
- Now, I'll just look ... Here, on, receive and rejoice.

Several photos from Thea emerged from the messenger.

"God, what a delight," exclaimed Alexander, seeing in the photo bare female legs in open sandals with red manicure on the toes. - Whose legs are these? Alexander asked.

- Whose, whose, my grandmother, of course - sneered Thea.
- Can't be so beautiful? – not immediately guessed Alexander.

In the headphones, the giggle of the beloved woman was barely audible, whose voice turned Alexander over his whole soul and insides.

- You can't even understand what it means to me to hear your voice and your laughter.

- Fatal love from a fatal woman! - continued to giggle Thea in the headphones.

- I would give my whole life now to jump out of the monitor to you and enclose you in my arms.

"Try it, maybe it will work," Thea continued to giggle. - Crazy love, from a crazy relative.

- Say you'll take me.

- Go, who's stopping you?

- Is it because I am at a distance from you, and if I were nearby, would you let me in? ..

- To bed?

- Watch out for corners, I'm married, I have a husband, a new family, and I'm not going to ruin it because of you.

- I dream about you at night, and everything has already happened between us more than once.

- Where? In a dream? Thea giggled again. - Only in a fairy tale. Only in a fairy tale does everything come true, - Thea sang, - in a fairy tale and in a dream. Here are a couple more of my photos.

In the messenger, two photographs of a young woman with tight-fitting jeans at the waist surfaced, on which for some reason several small round spots were visible.

- Well, how do you like me here?

- You look great in the back too, you've only lost a lot of weight.

Yes, my diet is to blame. Can you imagine, I recently went out in such a dress to the store, and there the men standing near the cars throw such things after me.

- Still, yes, I myself have been going crazy for you for a long time.

- Yes, but to pronounce such words aloud, I just did not expect Europe after all, after all? Probably, if she walked naked or in a miniskirt, there would not be such a reaction.

- Well, Europe is Europe, but you still be careful with the peasants, you know better than me that they are not reliable people.

- Do you judge by yourself?

- Well, let at least in itself, in some way. What are those stains on your jeans? Do not tell me the trousers are not clean, I would have washed them at least.

- Fool, it's such a mode now.

- Wow, to once again, probably, to attract attention?

- You know, I came home so upset after that, and Julia answered me, they say, that you are offended, rejoice, they say, that your ass of a forty-year old woman still attracts and turns on someone else, can you imagine?

Yes, she was right. Let me in, I beg you, at least with a word.

- Get away from me, Sandro, I'm not interested in such vulgarities.

- Why vulgarity and why not interested? Do not tell me, did you have menopause at an early stage?

There was a long pause.

- What happened to you, Thea, why did you stop talking? - Alexander thought at first that the connection was lost, but, having heard sounds from the interlocutor, he continued his question.

- Don't tell me, did you guess about the menopause?

"Worse," was the barely audible reply.

- What is worse, woman, what could be worse for a woman like you and at your age?

"Oncology," Thea said heavily.

Alexander froze in surprise, as if he had been scalded with boiled water.

- Come on, they don't joke like that, Thea.

- I'm not kidding.

- When was it determined and by whom?

- What's the difference?

- Yes, this simply can not be.

- Maybe, how can it be ... The doctor told me a long time ago that something was wrong with me there after the first birth, and in order to avoid further complications, the second birth would be the best solution, which would take out all the evil spirits from there.

But you, like a ram, rested on your principles. I can never forgive you for this, Sandro.

There was a long sigh into the microphone.

- Even after that, I waited and endured it for a long time, everyone hoped that maybe you would at least come to your senses in time, contact me and be able to

return me, but you were silent, silent and inactive all this long time, generally somewhere disappeared to make you feel bad. It is you who are to blame for everything, you killed our daughter, and maybe our son, with your principles, and let the person who dissuaded you from having me around give birth to you.

- Yes, but I didn't ask you much Thea, just ... And then, judge for yourself. You have everything - a rich husband, father, daughter, son-in-law, dog Rico, mother-in-law and father-in-law, abroad, a good house, a good job and salary. I don't have any of that! And the most important thing is missing.

- What?

- You. Now, perhaps, I would choose a moment next to you than an eternity without you!

"Be quiet, liar," a strict female voice interrupted him, "and don't look for any excuses for yourself, I hate you, forget about my existence at all," Thea ended the conversation with a sobbing cry and disconnected the connection.

- So much for you, - Alexander exclaimed to himself, - it's not for nothing that they say that from love to hate is just one step.

He also remembered that all unpleasant conversations with Thea ended with the same end and with the same words.

- And what I am guilty of, I don't understand, my guilt in stubbornness passes on me. This is a win-win game for women, which in any case ends in her victory, including that the man is always to blame for her. True, it turns out, they say that mutual love is more painful than unrequited love, but when it's not fate.

And here it is, this female revenge and stubbornness, and this is when in this case I am not to blame for anything, and when you are guilty, then it's not worth talking about it. However, nothing can be done, - Alexander reassured himself, - such is the law of unity and struggle of opposites.

XIII

The unconquered and non-surrendering human soul continues to fight until the last breath of a person, no matter how it is broken and crushed.

It is difficult for a person to part with a past life, and memories of it haunt him with a train all his life.

Particularly difficult are the memories of the minutes and years of life when he was in the prime of his powers and capabilities, and even more so if he was still a role model for others.

... A trembling hand, worn out by time of life, timidly reached out to the saucer brought to her face in order to take possession of the pill resting on it - one of the few taken daily over the past years, when she was cared for by a foreign nurse.

With the same trembling hand, the patient took a cup of water to drink the medicine.

A sip of water, not without difficulty, overcame the larynx and, together with the pill, fell into the stomach.

With a relieved feeling of accomplishment, the patient leaned back on the pillow, fixing her eyes on the ceiling.

- You know, I, like you, left my homeland and moved to this country with my husband and never regretted it, despite the fact that, like today, I still miss home. So you and I are both foreigners, - the patient smiled, leaning her back on the pillows placed behind her, - with the only difference that I have more experience of living in this country than you. Don't you regret that you moved to live here and married a foreigner for the second time?

- No, of course, - the nurse answered thoughtfully, - my husband is a very caring and loving person.

- This, of course, is good, God bless him, I hope you love him just as much?
A smile followed.

- Although, it is not absolutely necessary. It is a pleasant feeling when you are loved and taken care of, and so, of two lovers, one of them always loves more. And what did you have in your homeland, you are such a beautiful and smart girl, I suppose there were more than enough gentlemen?

- True, there were many, and now there are enough of them, - the nurse admitted.

- Tell me at least a little about yourself, about your past life, please.

- It's a very long story, who cares now?

- I'm interested, and we also have more than enough time. And then I'll tell you about my adventures. Let's gossip a little about men.

- Wow, - the nurse thought, - the minerals and vitamins that I give her obviously have a very positive and beneficial effect on her. From them, her mind clears up, and general health is maintained, and her character is corrected, which is also far from important for me.

"And he doesn't call you a muddle so often anymore," her inner voice added.
- In addition, you prolong her life and thereby your own salary.

"Yes," she admitted to herself, "although my husband provides for my life here, plus he spends quite a lot on maintaining my health, but it's all the same, whatever one may say, but I have to send my hard-earned hard-earned hard-earned money to my homeland." money.

- So, Thea, gossip with you about the men in our lives, or not?

- I really don't even know, since I remember only painful stories from the past, which I try in vain to forget.

- And amorous affairs are always associated with pain. Such men are bastards by nature, but we also give them a lot of heat for it, don't we, Thea?

Well, then, tell me about how and with whom you had your first time, if you can?

The patient's eyes filled with animal interest.

Thea blushed at the old woman's excessive frankness.

Apparently the vitamins and minerals are doing their job, she thought for the second time.

- Yes, do not be embarrassed, my daughter, after all, everyone knows everything about men for a long time.

Eh, - the old woman sighed, - if it were possible to have children without them, our life and our female lot would be much easier and more carefree.

Suddenly there was a knock on the front door, the conversation between the two interlocutors was interrupted by a third woman who entered the bedroom.

- Oh ... oh, - the old woman drawled, - Viola, daughter, so you came by the way.

The daughter looked at Thea in amazement.

- Hello, Viola, let me help you, - Thea hurried to free the hands of the woman who had come from the bags stuffed with provisions.

- Take them, please, to the kitchen, and then I will deal with them myself. Well, how are you, mom, tell me. Doesn't Thea offend you in any way?

- Sometimes only. - A little thoughtful, the patient answered.

- Yes, I see for myself how she offends you, today you seem to be in good shape.

- And when I'm not in good shape? the old woman asked.

"When you disobey Thea, you beat her, scratch her and call her a tangle," Viola explained with a smile, winking at Thea.

"That's when I'm most at my best," the old woman said proudly.

From the next room came a Skype call on Thea's laptop.

- All right, Viola. I will leave you for a while with your permission, you certainly have something to talk about with each other.

- Yes, yes, of course, Thea, go, answer the phone, - the sick daughter allowed, - and you, mother, do not offend Thea, please, you see how well she takes care of you.

- Yes, she's a mess anyway, she asked her to gossip about the peasants. And she doesn't want to split into anything

- Mom, how can you poking around in someone else's life so unceremoniously?

It's also a secret to me. After all, everyone has long known about men, and besides, in return, I also wanted to share my little secrets with her, and if she doesn't want to, then she doesn't need to," the old woman said offensively.

- Hello, Gocha, hello, father, - Thea happily greeted, via Skype with her older brother and seventy-year-old father, - how are you? I can see by your face that you look good.

"Hello, daughter," my father said through tears, caressing the screen of his monitor, "our village prolongs my life and the expectation of meeting you, otherwise you know that after your mother my life completely lost its meaning.

- Well, you can't do it like that, father, because you have us, and you are our joy.

- I only do what I think about you, daughter, and who else I still have in this life, but I can't forget my Oliko.

- We also do not forget mom, but to our delight you simply have to live long.

- Eh, daughter, - his father drawled, - you live in health and happily, but I have already lived my life one way or another.

- And you'll live a long time! Who will look after our house and land in the village like that, cultivate it and get a harvest, and then help us financially?

"Oh, there is someone," said the father, wiping his tears.

- Gotcha, what are you doing there next to my father, that he is in such a minor key, huh?

- No, he just burst into tears when he saw you, otherwise Dea and I visit him with our families almost every Saturday and Sunday, but he didn't have to see and communicate with you live for a long time, so our old man burst into tears.

- How are your families there, I hope everything is fine?

- Yes, so far it's fine, that's the only thing that in the city we have tortured guidelines and lockdowns, but in the village we have much more freedom with this.

- And how is it in the village, the crown also appeared?

- Appeared, appeared, isolated cases were identified in the village, but here it is still freer, - Gocha explained, - it is impossible to carry out agricultural work in masks, you yourself understand. Well, how are you, how is your health, family, work and our foreign son-in-law Jonah.

- Everything is fine, Gocha, thank you, if everything goes well, then perhaps next summer we will come with him, I will introduce you to him, he also wants this.

- And this summer will not be in time, daughter? the father groaned plaintively.

- I'm afraid not, father, the borders are closed everywhere and flights are suspended.

"If I were you, I wouldn't leave my old and sick father alone," the father continued to sob, almost not tearing his handkerchief from his eyes.

- Well, why one, father, because Gocha and Dea with their families are next to you.

"You could be by my side too, if you really wanted to. What, would you not find fans in our homeland? Yes, for the sake of such a beauty as you, many guys would give up their bachelor life.

- Many, but alas, not those who would like ... - Thea sighed.

The conversation with the family via video link lasted another half an hour, after which Thea went out to her patient, who had already had time to quarrel with her daughter, calling her a goodbye prostitute.

- All of you are confused, mother, but who will you be yourself? Thea asked.

"I am an unfortunate old woman, forgotten and abandoned by my children.

- No wonder, to get along with your character ... Do you lack something in my hands?

- No, of course, but my children and granddaughters are still closer, although who needs me so old and sick now. You won't understand it now, but when you reach my age...

- If I reach.

- You will achieve, you will not go anywhere, just promise me that at least then you will remember these words of mine.

- Absolutely!

- And there was a time, because of me, men were killed and even fought with each other almost to the death.

- And who did you get in the end?

- The most daring and courageous, and not like you, this your scumbag - Jonah. Don't you dare talk about him like that, you hear?

- Oh, mommy, I can't, but what is it? Yes, everyone knows about it.

- Not that I'll leave you.

"You leave, leave, and my bastard children will hire another nurse for me, and you will lose your salary," the old woman threatened.

- So I'll leave, and you stay here, - Thea warned in turn and, grabbing a jacket from a chair, retired to her room, to the laptop.

Anger at the nature of the sick old woman often visited Thea, but because of her love for the elderly, she quickly departed and began to take care of her patient with new energy.

But this time she did not go out for longer than usual to her requests and calls for help to put her to bed.

All of Thea's attention was directed to the video call and conversation, with her only twenty-two-year-old daughter, noticeably inferior to her in appearance and beauty.

"Mom, take me to your place, I beg you," the daughter pleaded, "I don't want and can't stay here anymore.

- Daughter, you just recently got married, does your husband offend you?

- No, what are you, Levan loves me very much and looks after me well.

- Then what's the matter?

- I'm afraid, very afraid of pain from the first night.

- What nonsense? What do you mean you're afraid? If a woman loves, then she endures and is not afraid of anything, - Tea explained.

- Aren't you afraid of that? That's all women are afraid.

- Levan promised to take you to a psychologist.

- Yes, we were with him more than once.

- So what?

- I'm sorry, what? It hurts me, mom, and I don't want this anymore, take me to your place, I beg you, I'm very afraid.

- Have you decided to destroy your newly created family?

- No, but I'm afraid of pain.

- Okay, I'll talk to Levan.

- What's the point?

He must be doing something wrong? After all, you were so killed and wanted to marry him, and now what? What did you dislike about your classmate, with whom you grew up together and spent most of your life?

- Well, how can you not understand, mom, that it hurts me, and I'm afraid. Remember, didn't the same thing happen to you?

How can you know what happened to me?

- I'm a girl too.

- Well, well, when Levan comes home from work, call me in the evening and I'll talk to him.

- He has not been working for a long time, and now we live on your money.

- Oh, that's it.

- What, what, and what does this have to do with it?

- And besides! Everything in this life is in close relationship, Veriko.

"Yes, you don't understand anything, mother, you never understood me and didn't want to understand," the daughter burst into tears and cut off the connection.

...Although the path from school to home in the village was not very long, but it passed through a wooded area, and even high school students avoided going through it alone.

Freed from the last lesson, three classmates, carried away by conversations, found themselves in a mountain forest belt.

Suddenly, a UAZ overtook them from the clearing and stopped in front of the high school girls, three adult healthy guys jumped out of the car, who attacked one of their friends and took her by force with them in a car, they were not at all frightened by the screams of the girlfriends left on the road.

The whole village and the patrol police service searched for the kidnapped woman for almost three days, they found her in a neighboring village, locked in a separate room.

The criminal case initiated on the fact put the girl before the choice to admit her abduction or to voluntarily flee with a man who allegedly loved her for a long time in order to save him from imprisonment.

Although the girl was attracted by the courage, courage and determination of her kidnapper, she was in love with her classmate, and they were going to get married soon after the last school bell.

But, as they say, life often loves to pamper us with its surprises, and alas, not always joyful ones.

- Come here to me, bitch, - the kidnapper pulled the gentle girl to himself by force by both hands.

- Don't, I beg you, Gia, - the victim pleaded.

- Shut up, bitch. - With a strong and sharp movement of his hands, he tore her outer clothing, exposing her chest. - I didn't want it in a good way, now get it in a bad way.

- Lord, what a bastard you are, - the victim cried.

- It's me, a bastard, so much trouble piled on my head and I had to serve some time in prison because of you, and am I a bastard?

- The rapist pushed the victim onto the bed with all his strength and, in an instant, tore off the clothes remaining on her, seizing her by force.

The next morning, the victim tried in vain to remove the traces of the bloody night.

"I will never forgive you for this, George," the victim swore, washing away the traces of the past night under the shower.

- So I didn't forgive, - Thea suddenly came to her senses after reflection, - she bore him a daughter, and what a daughter. He himself died, later on in one of the local wars, and left her daughter, as a memory of that unforgettable and terrible night, forever.

"They say that children are loved according to their mother," Thea recalled, "but what about their father?" She asked a question, never finding a definitive answer to it.

In life, everything is much more complicated and simpler at the same time than it might seem.

And now, these days, she had to give her daughter answers to those questions of life, to which she herself still did not have a complete and clear answer.

How can you love and hate a person, simultaneously reach out to him and repel him, not imagine life without him and avoid him at the same time. Ambivalence is probably one of the most difficult feelings experienced by a person in life.

Having finally gone out into the bedroom and laid the sleeping patient on the bed, Thea soon returned to her room to the laptop.

XIV

There is an opinion that a person writes the story of his life himself, creates his own destiny and is the blacksmith of his own life, while little depends on us in life, except for how we react to its gifts and surprises.

And a lot depends on a person's childhood, on the basis of life, on which the rest of it is subsequently built.

And how we are sometimes seized and held captive by confidence in our reasoning and thoughts, that disputes on this topic only strengthen us in our thoughts about being right.

A happy childhood and youth is almost ninety percent happy, subsequent, adult life.

Even after years of prescription, the sounds of individual automatic bursts, shots, bombings, air defense alarms did not stop sounding in the minds of the victims, and it was not possible to blame either oneself or one's parents for the horror of childhood.

And soon, many days of cold and hungry transition of a huge flow of people through a mountain winter pass. Cries, groans for help, crying from all sides for people dying on the way, the impossibility of their proper burial.

It was almost always like this in the entire history of mankind, when many peoples, hundreds of thousands, and even millions of people had to pay for the fatal miscalculations of individual rulers, and a large share of the tragedies and pain fell, of course, on children.

Such hard days burned them with a feeling of pain, more than which they most likely would not have to experience in their entire subsequent life.

- Yeah, what you're telling me, Julia, it's hard to even hear about it, baby, and I'm very sorry that I can't even console you with anything.

- Thank you, Lidia Ivanovna, I already treat you like my mother, who died along with many refugees who had to leave their homes and the land that raised them and on which they lived peacefully most of their lives. And my mother, even falling to the ground from exhaustion and fatigue, hugged me so tightly that they had hardly pulled me out of her hands, already dead. I will never forget her eyes and her dying look, despite the fact that I was then only eight years old. And then everyone lied to me long and hard about the fact that the mother was picked up by good uncles and taken to the hospital and that she would soon recover and return to me. But to this day no one has been able to stop my tears, except that such warm and good people like you, Lidia Ivanovna, only soften my pain a little.

- Thank you very much, my daughter. I understand you perfectly, I sympathize and experience your pain. Were there many of you refugees then?

- Almost half a million from Abkhazia, Lidia Ivanovna, - after almost twenty years, many more thousands were added already from the Tskhinvali region, and we have a considerable number of refugees even now, in peacetime. Therefore, we are forced to leave our homes, families, our children and go to work in foreign countries in order to somehow help our family from there, otherwise we have almost no normal work or salary in our homeland today. The country is in poverty, everything is becoming more expensive - food, medicine, medical care and everything else.

- It's not sweet for us today either, daughter. You probably know that our country, one of the poorest in the entire European Union, has long been on its subsidies.

"And anyway, compared to our country, your life is on a much higher level, because everything is known in comparison," Julia explained.

“Yes, of course,” agreed the sick old woman.

- And this is how my wandering life began from childhood, and now I, like a lonely sailing ship, driven by the wind of life, pull the strap of life where I have to.

- And what happened to your father, Julia?

- Our father died long before the outbreak of hostilities, as I heard from my relatives, due to a tragic accident at work. But then I was still very small and I hardly remember him, but my mother ...

Julia's eyes watered again.

- Forgive me, please, that I show my pain to you, but I have almost no one to share it with, only with you and my close friend Thea.

- So, my older brother and I survived, but he managed to move to the States with his family, and we communicate little with him, only sometimes via Skype. And in my homeland I still have my husband Tengiz, a sixteen-year-old daughter and an almost twelve-year-old son, because of whose well-being, in principle, I had to leave my homeland and go to work.

- I will ask Constantine and Athena not to offend you in the salary.

Julia's heart sank at the mention of the name of the old woman's son.

- Oh, no, no, what are you, mom, don't, I beg you, they already pay enough attention to me, I really don't need more. If only you live in good health and for a long time, then my affairs will be in order, - Julia smiled.

From the next room, a mournful meow of a kitten with a brindled color was suddenly heard.

- And here is our Barsik, - the hostess of the house affectionately greeted the kitten, - Ophelia sheltered him, picked him up on the street, but my daughter, Athena, does not get along with him, so we decided, let him live with his grandmother for now, and the granddaughter will come and visit him.

“Very nice,” agreed Julia, “for example, at one time I divided people into

two categories - loving cats and loving dogs, and I even know many examples when entire families broke up because of this.

- There is a third category of people, Julia, - Lidia Ivanovna noticed, - who do not like pets at all or do not accept their living in the house.

I don't think these people are normal at all.

- Me too, - the hostess agreed, stroking Barsik, who had jumped on her knees, gratefully purring with her hand. - But thank God, my daughter and son-in-law do not belong to such people, they just want to get a dog and are afraid that she will not get along with Barsik, although ...

- Oh, not necessarily this, they could at least try, and then ..., - Julia explained.

- No, daughter, there is another factor that affected Athena. Her friend had a shedding cat that jumped onto the kitchen table without asking, apparently leaving a hair on the food she ate, so as a result she had to undergo liver surgery and remove almost two-thirds. After that, we also developed a fear of cats.

- Oh, yes, they must be accustomed to everything, Lidia Ivanovna, - Julia began to explain. - Here, for example, in my homeland, a neighbor had a cat, which she even taught to jump on the toilet and pee there, can you imagine?

- Well, such cats are an exception, and you probably know that not only pets, but even your own children are badly brought up, - the hostess explained with a smile, continuing to stroke the purring kitten with her hand.

"For example, I prefer cats, even if they are more wayward than dogs," Julia explained.

"Me too," the hostess agreed with her, "since Barsik settled with me, he doesn't leave me for a minute, except for the time when he sleeps.

- Oh ..., this is such a healing animal that there is nowhere else, - Julia continued her explanations, - mysterious, mysterious and magical animals, still not fully understood. After all, it is not for nothing that they say that the doctor never enters the house where the cat lives, since the cat heals people by its mere presence.

- Yes, of course, - the hostess agreed, - I can even say this on my own and I can clearly feel it on myself, how my nerves have come into order, the pressure has become less disturbing. And then again, as soon as my old and flabby body feels pain somewhere, Barsik turns up right there, jumps on me and lays down to lie just on the sore spot where I feel pain most of all.

- Oh, yes, Lydia Ivanovna, - Julia agreed with her, - I myself read that cats emit high-frequency vibrations with their bodies and, lying down on a person's sore spot, they tune the vibrations of the diseased part of the body to their own frequency, and this happens frequency capture. And paraphrasing the quatrain of the great poet, we can say that the frequency is no longer the same as it was at the beginning, someone else's fate - the frequency, having become its fate, recognizing it, leads away. This very principle of treatment is successfully used to this day in medicine, namely in the field of physiotherapy.

- Interesting, - Lidia Ivanovna was amazed.

- Yes, yes, it turns out that doctors measured the vibration frequencies of individual human organs and found out their frequency-resonant characteristics, which are fundamentally different from those that are formed in the same organs, only in a diseased state. So, with the help of appropriate physiotherapy, the frequencies of vibrations of individual diseased human organs are increased, as a result of which they subsequently heal themselves.

- It's great, Julia, and how do you know all this? the hostess asked.

- I once worked as a nurse in the physiotherapy department and myself observed such a process of healing our patients. By the way, there I also met my now best friend, Thea, after which we became very friends and I now partly owe her, because I ended up at work in your country and with you," Julia smiled.

"In that case, she deserves a big thank you for this from me," the hostess concluded, "and be sure to tell her a lot of thanks from me too."

- Of course, Lydia Ivanovna.
- Tell her that she can visit us more often.
- Yes, but, unfortunately, she has her own patient. Do you know? Julia recalled.

"Ah, yes, this is her prostitute," the hostess recalled with a laugh. "The only pity is that our Barsik is going to be castrated in the near future," she noted with regret.

- Oh, why? - Julia supported her regret, - isn't it a pity to treat him like that and ruin his breed like that? I'm just crazy about brindle kittens, and then isn't it too early for him?

- Well, he is already more than a year old, so what is possible, probably? And then he will start asking for the street, to stray cats, and then some other infection can bring home.

After all, the boy is a male in the prime of his life - and the peasants are an indomitable people, you yourself probably know as well as I do that people are animals.

"Yes, indeed," Julia agreed, after a moment's thought. Looking at them, I gratefully turn to God for being born a woman and not a man, despite the pain and the torment that we women have experienced.

we eat during childbirth.

- Hmm, - Lydia Ivanovna grinned, - it's amazing to hear such an answer from you, daughter, an answer that can not be heard from any woman.

- Well, why not? I know many women who agree with my opinion, - Julia confirmed. - We, women, for the most part, of course, are more gentle and pious creatures than naturally militant men - predators, who, by the way, because of their such nature, live less than women, and not because how often we reproached, we often load and exploit them without measure. They cannot understand the most important thing, that even predators in the wild also do not live long, since their internal secretion organs work properly only in a state of calm.

- How many useful things you know, Julia, - Lidia Ivanovna was surprised, - even I would say perhaps more than some doctors.

- Thank you, but it seems so natural that every person can easily understand, it is enough for this only to look more closely and closely in life, to each life-giving process. Is not it?

- Perhaps, but this work also requires a kind of patience and inner willpower, which often break in people under the pressure of objective and independent circumstances and processes that fall like avalanches on a person. And to survive in such cases, and for a long time, to maintain one's belonging both to oneself and to the world around is not so easy. For, each person, by birth, is born only with positive qualities, in the image and likeness of God, and then, as he goes through life, he gradually begins to lose most of his good qualities.

“Like an electron moving in an electron field from point A to point B and deviating from its path,” Julia muttered in a barely audible voice.

“Quite right, daughter,” Lidia Ivanovna agreed with her.

- Then where is the way out for a person how to preserve the originality, humanity, piety and godliness entrusted to him from birth by the Creator in his actions?

- There can be only one answer here, Julia, - Lidia Ivanovna instructively explained, - in the Creator, in all his sacraments, commitments and participation. And only in this way, it is possible for a person to find his salvation and preserve the human form, pleasing to himself and the Creator too.

“How simple and complicated it is at the same time,” Julia muttered under her breath. - As one great man said, life is a tragedy for those who live by feelings, and a comedy for those who live by the mind.

- Yes, indeed, and no one knows in advance whom and with whom fate will bring. Who will be a friend, who will be an enemy, and who will be an acquaintance just like that, - the hostess began.

- Who will make happy, who will betray, who will take away, who will give everything away, who will regret deeds and words, and who will share bread and shelter, like you and your whole family. Lidia Ivanovna, - Julia continued with gratitude. - I am immensely grateful to you for everything and, first of all, for the fact that you replaced my mother and thanks to you, probably for the first time in my life I realized that there is maternal care and love, which I have been missing all my life.

- Before you, I also had a good nurse who told me the story of her mother, who at the end of her life almost lost her mind. And as she told me, it turns out that her attending psychiatrist told her that if at least one person in the world had truly loved her mother, then this misfortune would not have happened to her and she would not have become so mentally ill.

Julia stared silently into Lidia Ivanovna's eyes.

- Yes, yes, daughter, every person in the world needs love, wants to love and be loved, otherwise, like this ... It is known that a person is not only death, but also salvation. Of everything you heard from you, only your mother loved you, and, perhaps, your untimely departed father, and in other cases, you loved and love mostly you, don't you?

“Almost,” Julia tried to remember, “except maybe you, my friend Thea, and my children.

- Does your husband, Tengiz, love you?

“I think so,” said Julia.

- If I loved, I would not let you work in a foreign country.

- You think so? Julia thought.

“Children and friends are things that come and go, Julia,” the hostess shook her head, “and a woman needs a loving man next to her, and a loving woman for a man, because God himself says that it’s bad for a person to be alone.

- You just climbed into my soul, mom, - Julia burst into tears, and rushed into the arms of her mistress. “I missed the male affection and the loving man next to me, but here, in a foreign land, I have no one,” she complained.

- Well, why, Julia, - broke the idyll of a female conversation, Konstantin imperceptibly entered the room, - do we deprive you of the whole family of attention and love?

- Oh, son, you are my dear, - the affectionate and loving maternal voice responded with love, - Julia and I did not notice your arrival. Something happened? We did not expect you today, although we are glad.

Julia recoiled in fear at the rough male voice and, going to the window and standing with her back to the

walking man, slightly pushed back the curtain and began to look at what was happening outside the window.

“It happened, mom, it happened,” Konstantin threw angrily.

- What, son? the mother asked fearfully.

- Something that happens in my life almost daily. I no longer have the strength to endure the tantrums and debriefing of my wife, ”complained Konstantin to his mother.

What does she want this time? she asked.

- The fact is that I lost somewhere a golden bracelet that she gave me, which also protects me from high pressure. So, how much time has already passed since your birthday, when I lost it, and she keeps nawing my brains that I didn’t lose it, but gave it to my non-existent mistress. Can you imagine what kind of concerts she gives me on this topic every time she wants to quarrel with me. Just blows my mind! And I don't even know how long this can go on?

Julia looked sternly in the direction of Konstantin, catching in turn his plaintive look in her direction.

- Look for this bracelet, maybe I dropped it with you, mom.

“Good, good,” the mother promised, kissing her son on the forehead, “we’ll look, and if we don’t find it, then I’ll buy you the same one.”

- It won't work, Mom. She still guesses.

- I will ask Julia to look for him, and now I ask you to take me to your bed, I have been sitting for a long time.

Julia's heart sank.

Her capture in the alleged theft of a gift from Konstantin's wife could deprive her of all the benefits received in the employer's family, and then she let down Thea, on whose recommendation, after a long search for employment, she found a job in this family.

Therefore, having put the old mother to bed, she, together with Konstantin, began to carefully look for his bracelet, which she herself hid in a safe place of her things just in case, only in order to blackmail him with this gift in case of Konstantin's continued harassment, in front of his wife and members his family.

Konstantin vainly recalled all the places at home in which he, being already fairly tipsy, lingered, including with Julia.

"I died," Konstantin complained, sitting in the bedroom next to his mother, slapping himself with the palms of both hands on his head lowered to the floor. - My family is collapsing, the family for the retention and preservation of which I fought all my life for the sake of my children with all my strength and means.

"Sooner or later, Konstantin," Julia sympathized.

She was one step away from confession, but Konstantin, as if struck by a high-voltage current, by the touch of her hand, jumped up and took her by the shoulders with his hands, began to shake her vigorously.

"If I lost it here, then you couldn't help but find it," he shouted at her in a loud voice.

Julia shook her head in dismay.

"No, I didn't find him," she swore in fright.

"You are to blame for everything," he suddenly began to blame her for everything that had happened, "it was you who made eyes at me all that day and turned my head, you.

- I AM...? Julia objected indignantly. "How dare you accuse me of your obscenity," she shouted at him.

- And so, - he shouted back to her and continued to shake her shoulders.

Julia was speechless from confusion and surprise and rolled her eyes indignantly.

Feeling that the girl's strength was running out, and she was about to fall to the floor, in a strong emotional outburst, he grabbed her by the head. With both hands, as if in a vice, squeezing her head, he dug his lips into her tender lips, which surrendered to an unexpected onslaught.

Taking advantage of the instant relaxation of the aggressor, Julia pushed him away from her, but soon he, with renewed vigor and new zeal, pounced on the victim, who was yielding his positions, covering her with many new jerky kisses.

Long and long kisses on her neck, lips, eyes, cheeks allowed him to move further and further along her body, despite the fading verbal objections.

- What are you doing, let me go, how dare you, you are married, and I am married, you are destroying both our families.

She involuntarily lowered her gaze to her bare snow-white breasts with hardened nipples, Konstantin managed to stick his hand inside her sports trousers, lustfully feeling the desired part of the body.

- Eh! Julia screamed with renewed vigor, "let me go now, otherwise I'll scream."

The hand immersed in her underwear instantly jumped out and grabbed her mouth, preventing them from making new sounds.

- Hush, hush, you will wake your mother, and everyone will know about your wickedness and shame, - Konstantin threatened, continuing to kiss her.

"I love you, Julia, I love you at first sight and I won't do anything bad to you," Konstantin swore.

Julia was taken aback by surprise for a moment and with mixed feelings began to devour the gaze of Konstantin, frozen in a stupor.

Then, to Konstantin's great surprise, she suddenly pulled down her sports house trousers herself, angrily threw out to him: - Choke, animal.

PART THREE

XV

The experience of sports training at multi-day camps in the past, in his youth, gave Beno a significant head start in the grueling and monotonous street work of laying road slabs, even in front of local peers who managed to get tired in turn.

- Eric, Hans - try to keep up with us, - the call of the road foreman was heard.

"It would be better if you slow down, and let Vano carry the plates according to safety standards, and not twice as much, translate for him," suggested Hans, a tall, thin young worker.

"Indeed, Beno, in the past he was like a football player, not a rugby player," a thin man of short stature joked.

- Guys, you might think that you are visiting emigrants, and Vano and I are local, judging by the work, - Beno teased the local workers - a man of medium height and heavy build.

"Don't listen to them, Beno, otherwise we won't be able to lay the slabs to the corner of the next street until tonight," Vano advised. - After all, we already know more than one remark from the authorities, they will get tired of it, they will take it, and they will change us to another brigade, what will we do then?

"Perhaps you are right, Vano," Beno agreed with him. - If we go on about these local turtles, then we will lose this job.

- I'll have to take on some of their duties, - suggested Vano, - I'll never know how you can stop in such a cold.

- But we do not stop, we just arrange a smoke break, - Eric tried to justify himself, to which Hans also nodded his head in agreement.

"Beno, please bring a bag of cement from there for mortar, and I'll prepare a sand funnel here," Vano asked his fellow countryman, pointing at the other end of the street, and he went for a shovel and a hose with water.

- Hans, let's stretch the rope to maintain the level of masonry, - suggested Eric. - otherwise these our emigrants only remember about speed, but they forget about quality.

"Yes, you're right, Eric," Hans agreed with him, "it won't be very pleasant if our work is rejected because of their haste and forced to do it again, besides, they don't pay anything.

"Then you look after the quality," suggested Beno, "and we will look after the speed, okay?"

- It's coming, - agreed Hans, and in sign of the conclusion of the contract, the workers clashed the fists of their right hands.

By noon, it was agreed to spend no more than half an hour on a break, since downtime at work was not subject to payment, although it was not forbidden.

- This is where the covenant of the Bolsheviks is so strictly fulfilled - to each according to his merit and to each according to his work, - Vano recalled.

- How do you know this? Beno asked.
- How, did I not tell you that in a past life I was a Bolshevik? Wano explained.
- Yah? Beno was surprised.
- Just kidding, - Vano smiled, - I know from my father.
- Okay, where shall we go for a lunch break?
- "To the tavern," suggested Hans.
- Will we eat fish for lunch again? Vano objected.
- No, we'll try to diversify lunch for you today, - Eric promised.

At the dining table in the restaurant, four workers sat in compliance with all epidemiological requirements and social distance, but this did not prevent them from choosing the desired dish for themselves from their price list, kindly provided by the waiter.

- So, what's on the menu, - Eric began to read it.
- What of our national? Hans asked.
- Lingonberry jam with cutlets, - began Eric.
- What a horror, - Beno was surprised, - who eats sweet meatballs.
- Wait, let me read to the end, - suggested Eric, - and then let everyone choose what he likes. - Pickled herring, shrimp sandwiches, crayfish, Wallenberg cutlets.
- Which ones? - Vano asked, - what are they made of?
- Ingredients, - continued to read Eric, - veal, cream, egg yolk, sugar, potatoes, frozen peas, ground white pepper, frozen lingonberries.
- Is that sweet meat again? Beno was surprised.
- Meatballs with lingonberry sauce, - continued Eric, - engamat - that's a vegetable salad, guys - herring snans.
- What about baking? Wano asked.

"Molasses," Eric read out, "gingerbread cookies with icing and apple pie." Oh, they have pea soup on the menu, - Eric exclaimed, - I missed it by accident.

- Here it goes, - supported all four sitting at the dinner table, - engamat, and so be it, meatballs with lingonberry sauce.
- What about a drink? Hans asked.
- "Schnapps," Eric continued to read.
- Shall we get drunk? Beno objected.

"Then we won't be able to work," Vano agreed.

"It's possible a little, for a glass, we'll at least warm up," suggested Hans. - And let's take our national yulmust or wine, a foreign car, - added Eric.

"So be it," agreed Hans, and he was supported by two emigrants.

The waiter, having accepted the order from the road masters, hastened to fulfill it.

"Oh, no offense guys, but our traditional cuisine is much richer and tastier," Beno boasted.

"Every cuckoo praises its own nest," said Hans.

"We like ours, too," Eric confirmed.

"Guys don't argue about tastes," Vano intervened. - but when you come to our homeland and taste our cuisine, then and continue our discussion.

- When will it be, Vano? Eric asked.

"This cursed crown will probably run out someday," Beno suggested.

"Let's hope so," Hans suggested.

"In any case, it seems that it will be possible to curb the crown all over the world sooner than to put our country on its feet economically," Vano remarked with regret.

- Everything will pass - claimed King Solomon, - Eric remembered.

"Together with our lives, yes," Hans confirmed.

- What a minor mood, friends, before the meal, - Eric tried to cheer up his colleagues.

- Beno, Vano came to our country relatively recently, and you have been living in our city for more than a year, why and who do you miss the most? Hans asked.

- For his family, of course, - Beno answered without hesitation, - and then for his city, country, in our speech, well, Vano filled in this last deficit for me, - he explained.

- I understand you well, Beno. - I also traveled a lot in Europe before the crown, - added Eric, - but still, without life in my city, I could not hold out for a long time.

- Yes, guys, and nostalgia is felt stronger during long departures and upon return, and when you live in your city, you don't feel this attachment to it with such force, - Vano added.

- And here is our pea soup, - Beno exclaimed with joy, - inhaling its aroma through a cloud of steam. - Still, an old and familiar dish is much better than an unknown, new one.

- Well, - Eric raised a glass of schnapps, - for our friendship and for our work, friends, - and clinked glasses with the employees sitting at the dinner table.

"Fuf, good job," Hans breathed with relief and as if with a sense of accomplishment.

- Our chacha is tastier, - Vano noticed.

"Yes, we have heard this from Beno many times before," Eric clarified.

"Beno has already buzzed our ears to all of us, that everything is supposedly better with you than with us," Hans confirmed, "only one thing is not clear, if everything is better with you, then what the hell are you doing in our country, would you stay with themselves in their homeland and boasted in front of their own, - he was perplexed.

- Hans, that's enough, - Eric slowed him down, - they are guests after all.

"Then let Beno not rock the boat and live according to the laws of our country," Hans remarked displeasably.

- What do you have against us and our country? - Wound up Beno, pressing on Hans.

"Stop it now, both of you," Eric commanded and told the waiter to bring another glass of schnapps for everyone.

- Maybe we don't need more, Eric, we still have to work, - warned Vano.

"One more drink for the truce and we'll stop there," Eric confirmed.

- Yes, indeed, otherwise the first glass opened all the channels inside and asks for a second one.

- You see, guys, in our country, there is an unspoken law, which is called in one word - lag, - Eric began his second toast, - which means moderation of everyone and in everything.

"That is, everything in moderation," added Hans.

- Exactly, - Eric confirmed, - and, besides, this law says that no one is better than another, and all people are equal before each other and before God, so boasting is considered a very bad form among us.

- Excellent, - supported Vano, - for equality, peace and friendship.

- Behind the lag! - Eric raised his glass, and all four sitting at the table clinked their glasses, drinking another dose of alcohol, and began to continue to eat dishes of national cuisine.

Soon after the second glass of alcohol was followed by a third under the pretext that God loves the trinity.

The contradictions between Ben and Hans quietly reached their climax, until Hans, unable to stand it, got up from his chair and grabbed Beno by the collar of his overalls, pretty rubbing him.

Wano and Eric barely managed to separate them, after which all four were asked to leave the bar area.

The quick-tempered employees could not calm down for a long time even at the construction site, until their foreman, Jan, an elderly man, of medium height and heavy build, intervened in the dispute.

- Well done, guys, I'm waiting for you here until you finish your meal, but it turns out that you are drinking alcohol there and butting heads with each other, then who will work for you, have you forgotten, I hope that your wages are hourly?

- No, we're only a little, Jan, - Eric tried to justify himself.

- I know your littleness, how long I look at the clock, waiting for you in the car.

- Jan, just Beno got us all with his boasting, we can't drum him in about our principle - with a lag, - Hans complained about the employee.

- We have another principle, Hans, a sober lifestyle, not to mention drinking alcohol during working hours.

- Mr. Yan, I'm to blame for everything, - Vano took the blame, - just the cold tore us a little, so we decided to warm up a little.

- Well, warmed up, I hope? Yang asked angrily.

"Ian, forgive us, this won't happen again," Eric apologized.

- Of course, it will not happen again, you are all fired.

- Jan, wait, please, - they rushed to dissuade the foreman, who was heading for his car, from the decision, almost all four working for him, but he was inexorable.

- Tomorrow you will go sober to the office to receive a salary for half a day of today's work, and you are free, - Jan slammed the door of his car.

In the evening

On the same day, Vano was watching fragments of his favorite films on the YouTube channel on his laptop.

Thus, he managed to somehow maintain the fighting spirit of his spirit, so as not to completely become limp and not surrender to life as a prisoner.

In particular, he loved films about the Roman Empire, from the time of its formation, heyday and collapse, as well as films about the Spartans, Alexander the Great and other heroes of past centuries. He especially admired the courage and perseverance of the gladiators.

And now he listened to the appeal of one of them to Caesar: "O great Caesar, I salute you, going to death."

- We all go to death - he thought - only each in his own way.

He was always captivated not only by the courage and courage of warriors and gladiators, but also by their honesty and manner of fighting.

Watching a movie about Spartacus was suddenly interrupted by a video - a Skype call.

"Yes, Eka, where are you still, I have been trying in vain to get through to you all evening," he asked his classmate wife, seeing her smile on the video camera.

- Yes, she was busy with the kids, - his young pretty wife justified herself, smiling at him in response.

- With what kids, mother, Marie is already twenty, and Datoška is eighteen, it's enough to babysit them, adults already and let them get used to an independent adult life, and we only help them if necessary.

"No, you don't quite understand, Megi has littered with us," the wife explained.

- Wow, - Vano was delighted, - wasn't it too early for her, when?

- Last night, since the evening, the poor thing was tormented, and the "Prince" too. You should have seen how he rooted for her and worried with her.

- Great, well, how many puppies do we have?

- Only three survived, and for some reason one died, they could not save him, the children were very worried about them.

- Why did it happen all of a sudden? Vano asked.

- Well, Meggie is still young, you know, and she has given birth for the first time, maybe due to inexperience.

- Well, who is in our offspring, - Vano asked.

- Two girls and one boy, now I'll show them to you.

“Here they are, look,” Eka showed two German shepherd parents and three puppies sleeping in a ball nestled at the mother’s chest. - Meggie, Prince, - say hello to Vano, here he sends you greetings from the monitor screen, - Eka suggested to her four-legged household members.

Meggie, the mother of the family, hurried to greet her master with a short bark, in a low voice, and the Prince, the father of the family, limited himself to sniffing the camera of the tablet.

- Well, Eka, be sure to go to our club of cynologists to Kako, make a pedigree of puppies and ask him to help you sell them, I think at least a piece of bucks will be able to help out on them.

- Dad, hello, - half-asleep Marie, Vano's daughter, ran up, - how are you, we missed you so much when you come back to us?

- Soon, daughter, soon, just take care of yourself, your mother and your brother, my young son-in-law, and, of course, our pets.

- Yes, dad, don't worry, everything will be ok with us, only you come soon. Yes, and let us not sell our babies until we've had enough of them.

- Well, daughter, where is Datoška, call him, I want to see him too.

- He fell asleep early, pa, he had a hard training day today, he came home very tired.

- Well, my daughter, say hello to him, one of these days I will call back again.

- Vano suddenly remembered that the time difference between their cities was four hours, and now it is almost twelve o'clock at night in his homeland.

- Okay, my sun, go to rest and let us talk with mom now.

- Well, dad, I kiss you, and we look forward to it, - Marie sent a kiss to her father.

- How are you with finances, Eka, hold on for now?

- Yes, of course, what a comparison, after you and your dad sent us a tidy sum, - explained Vano's wife.

- Do not deny yourself anything, and what will remain, try to get rid of interest and part of the debt, - Vano admonished.

- I know, dear, I know, don't worry about us, you know me, I'll do everything that needs to be done. Only now they are asking for a contribution to the football section for Datoška, and I agreed for Marie's studies, and they give us a small delay.

- How much do they ask for the football section?

Eka named the amount.

- Well, not a little, so we paid them quite recently, didn't we? - suddenly remembered Vano.

- Yes, but now they said that this amount is needed for fees. Vano, maybe we will say goodbye to Datoška's football, I will talk to him, he will understand us.

- No, don't you, - Vano immediately cut him off, - don't you see, with what love and desire he goes to this sport. I know from my own experience how painful

it is to say goodbye to what you love, - Vano explained. - If not for a knee injury, then I would have followed my favorite sport to the end and would not be here now, and we would not be so poor. This is out of the question for Ek, Datoshka will play football as long as he is happy, and I will get money for his sport here, and then, who knows, maybe he will grow into a good football player, he will play in club teams, and then all our labors will return a hundredfold, mother.

- Well, Vano, - agreed.

Soon the family conversation ended, and Vano decided to do another in skype call.

After long and drawn-out calls, he finally managed to hear a return greeting from his ward.

- Sandro, hello, dear, how are you without me? - Wano asked.

- Oh, oh, Vano, dear, hello, - his employee answered, - haven't talked to you for a long time. How will we be here without you, Vano? What we built together, everything collapses and becomes unusable without you.

- What else do you have there? Wano asked.

"You know better than me that a new broom sweeps in a new way, but not always in the right direction.

- Again this batono Bezhan?

- And who else?

- I will not rest until I take him away from us, - Vano promised in a confident voice, - let him command over others and in other departments, and let my guys be left alone.

- It will not be easy, Vano, almost everyone bows before him and greases up.

- He will not take me with this, - Vano explained.

"I know dear, I know," Alexander agreed with him.

- I tried to get along with him like a human being, but it didn't work. Now let him know that I can do it differently. When the time comes, I will dictate a letter to you, print it out and give our guys to sign, and then bring this letter to the president of the company, and then we'll see who gets it.

- It will be done, chief, - Alexander reported, - only I'm afraid that ...

- What? Don't be afraid, I know my business, Sandro, - Vano assured him. "You still don't know what numbers he played with us, you won't tell about everything.

- What I know is enough, Vano.

- What do you know, Sandro? Wano asked.

- I know from one of our mutual friends that he ordered you to monitor everyone and everything that happens in our company and report to him.

- Yes, it happened, he instructed me to "knock" on everyone to him personally, but that's not all, believe me, Sandro. So I have a personal score with him, I will deal with him, including with your help.

- We remain under your command, Vano, although now he is formally our boss.

- I know, guys, I believe in you that you will not let me down, and thank you very much for that. Say hello to everyone, and stay there without me, it is very possible that I will come at the end of summer, well, at least for a while, I don't know how it will turn out. Say hello to Misha, tell him to hold on, I'll come soon and take care of all of you guys, otherwise our currency is constantly devaluing, and no one even thinks of adding your salary, they are all masters only to command.

By the end of the conversation, Vano noticed that he did not have time to pause the viewing of his favorite movie and only arrived in time for its end.

- Spartans, - King Leonid addressed his soldiers, - listen to my command, we will not be able to keep Thermopylae, we will try to kill King Xerxes.

The surviving handful of Spartans, led by their leader Leonidas, rushed at the enemy in a triangular wedge.

- Vano, stop watching the same thing all the time, son, come to the table to have dinner with us, at the same time tell us what happened at your work, - his father suggested to him.

- Which one? Vano replied in a half voice.

"Go, son, go, wash your hands and come to us," the mother's affectionate voice soon rang out, "but when he came home from work, he didn't eat anything."

A family dinner at the table, in a foreign land, was not much different from the same dinner in his homeland, with the only difference being that the Vano family was also sitting at the table in his homeland, for the sake of which he went to all the trials unknown to him until now.

At an evening family dinner, the head made the first toast to the homeland, to the temporarily abandoned paradise.

"We were twice expelled from paradise," he said, "when we were born on earth and when we were forced to be in a foreign land.

XVI

It seemed that both trees and other green spaces, as well as its inhabitants, birds - pigeons, thrushes, woodpeckers, crows, magpies and, of course, faithful patriots of their places - sparrows, had long resigned themselves to a multi-storey building sunk in a forest.

All of them were united by one common feature - devotion to this place, regardless of any weather conditions and seasons, and only one vulnerability, the attitude of the inhabitants of this skyscraper towards them, from whom only one condition was required: to live and work here not only themselves, but also do not deprive the feathered inhabitants of this opportunity.

On warm summer days, as if monitoring an unspoken agreement on peaceful coexistence, swallows and swifts circled high in the sky above the office building.

The morning here was awakened by the call of yellow-billed thrushes, and although their trills might be incomprehensible to an inexperienced ear, in fact, by

listening to them carefully, one could understand what they were gossiping with each other.

It was very interesting to hear love songs from them. This helped them to overcome all natural and worldly difficulties. Neither the coronavirus epidemic nor the severe economic crisis in the country touched them.

But they also had enemies, of which the most dangerous were people who were able to cut down entire areas of their permanent habitats - green areas, as well as cats that ran wild and starved for their meat.

The ringing trills of yellow-billed thrushes shimmering in different tonalities woke up all the feathered inhabitants of the area. Sparrows, woodpeckers and pigeons were the first to wake up.

Even wild pigeons easily got used to cohabitation with people. Moreover, it seemed that the birds very well studied each employee working in the high-rise building, and could easily distinguish them from new people - customers who temporarily came here.

And now, flying from one tree to another, they gossiped about the tall Gulliver standing in the courtyard of the skyscraper, listening attentively and with admiration to their trills.

"They sing beautifully," a confession escaped from Gulliver's lips.

- Yes, you are right, batono Bezhan, - Grigory agreed with him - the oldest of the three guards on duty at the lower post, a thin man of average height of sixty-five years. - We would care about them.

- They also have enough worries of their own, Grisha.

- The guys and I listen to their trills every morning and it seems that we have learned to understand their language.

- Well done.

- But it's much more difficult to communicate with people. You explain to some employees that the parking spaces in the yard are already booked for certain numbers, but they, under various pretexts, still climb where they are not supposed to, and absolutely do not listen to our words.

- Well, write down the numbers of their cars and give them to me, and then I'll deal with them as needed.

- All right, batono Bezhan.

"Why don't they park their cars in the lower yard car park?"

- They put them there too, but it's just more convenient and faster for them to enter the office.

- Understandably.

- But in the last duty, for example, one employee could not open the barrier with his remote control to leave the lower courtyard, so he took it by force, with his hands, broke its mechanism and drove off.

- Yes, in general, one lawlessness, what is inside, what is from the outside. But it's okay, I'll quickly put things in order.

The conversation was interrupted by an unexpected phone call.

- Yes, Dali, what do you have there?

- Batono Bezhan, a foreman and workers came to see you.

- All right, Dali, I'm already here and now I'll go up to them. In general, Grigory, do as I told you and give me the license plates of the cars of the recalcitrant employees.

- All right, batono Bezhan, it will be done, - Gregory minted with military hardening.

In his office, the administrator of the company spent a long time explaining to the foreman, invited from a private construction company, what rearrangements of the walls in which rooms needed to be done.

- Do you understand, Dilar? the administrator asked.

- Yes, for a start, and then the case will show, - the foreman answered.

- You, most importantly, start, and then everything will be seen.

- Well, I will clarify all your instructions on my construction drawing, draw up an estimate for the project and all necessary building materials, and agree with you.

- Okay, it's coming, there's only one place on the top floor that I still want to show you, Dilar.

Saying goodbye to the foreman and the workers, who had already begun to destroy the partition between the two small rooms of the upper floor, on the way to his office the administrator ran into Irakli Georgievich.

- Irakli, I carefully studied the work schedule of the cleaners and came to the conclusion...

- To which?

- They practically do nothing.

- Bejan, what are you talking about? The interlocutor looked at him in surprise.

- How do they do nothing when they come in the morning, clean the rooms, dust, take out the trash, wash the floors ...

- Yes, but this is in the morning, and then they do nothing all day.

- What else should they do?

- Like what? Not much work during the day? So I introduced, for example, hourly duty schedules and hung them in the toilet rooms, let them monitor cleanliness and order everywhere every hour, and then sign these sheets.

- Then I wondered why the cleaners wrote a letter of resignation, - having understood the situation, exclaimed the acting president of the company.

- This is not a problem, we will find others in their place, who will better perform their duties, believe me. In addition, I found overcharged water and energy costs, and I will also deal with these issues closely.

- Look, you know better, - the interlocutor suggested, - just don't break too much firewood.

Returning to his office, the administrator asked Dali for coffee, which he drank very late that day.

- Dali, tell the employees of the internal night security Alexander and Mikhail that they take readings from the water meter in the evening before closing the main water supply valve and in the morning before opening it. We need to define where we have water losses, if we have them.

- So they did it before, batono Bezhan. I even remember that then Michael was bitten by wild wasps.

- Once they did it, it is very good, so they already have experience in this matter, and let them resume this work. And then, since when did you start arguing with me?

"Excuse me, batono Bezhan," Dali said, lowering her head, barely audibly.

- And now inform our cleaners that I'm arranging a general meeting of cleaners in the meeting room of our floor in half an hour.

"Okay, batono Bezhan," Dali agreed meekly.

- And before that, call our electrician Enveri to me, I also have an urgent matter for him.

After some time, Enveri listened to new instructions from his boss.

- In order to reduce electricity consumption and fees, in order to save the company's money, we must do the following: put additional power cut-off boxes in the electrical panels of each floor, the same as those provided for air conditioners.

- And the night watchmen in this case will move along the corridors in the dark? the electrician was surprised.

- Well, - the administrator agreed after some thought, - let's leave them light from toilets to electrical panels and elevators.

- Yes, otherwise they have to respond to a false alarm and then contact the private security signalmen by phone in complete darkness.

- Yes, yes, and one more thing, here's an hourly report sheet for each floor to monitor power supply, after an hourly round you will sign it and hand it in to Dali at the end of the working day.

- Well, - the electrician agreed indistinctly and left the office with a surprised look. - Completely crazy, you see, our new boss - he admitted to himself.

Overwhelmed by the chores of another hectic day, Bezhan did not even notice that he had missed his lunch break.

- Yes, Lela, what do you have there? he asked his wife's unexpected call.

- They called from your hotel, people who wanted to stay came to us, but the employees do not know, they accepted them without medical certificates.

- Foreigners?

- Seems to be yes.

- How many people?

- Several families.

Why didn't they call me?

- I don't know, they said they didn't get through, and therefore contacted me.

- Okay, I'll take care of myself.

- Will you come home on time today or, as always, will you be late?
- No, today, seem on time.
- All right, we are waiting for you, Sandro has something to do with you.
- What else business?
- I don't know, he doesn't say, come and find out for yourself.
- A real madhouse, not life, - the admin found on his mobile a missed call from a hotel located in the old city area.
- Well, what do you have there? he asked the employee of his hotel.
- Batono Bezhan, there are three families of foreigners here, they say that they underwent medical control at our airport, but they have no other medical certificates indicating their state of health. What should we do, populate them?
- Take them through thermal screening and populate, - the admin suggested after a minute's pause. - Dali, call the employees of our department, Lasha and Merab, to me, I have urgent business with them.
- All right, batono Bezhan, - the secretary obediently responded.
- Father, hello, how are you? Bezhan asked on the phone.
- Yes, nothing like, son, that's something mom got a little sick.
- What with her?
- Pressure in the morning, then she fell and hurt her knee.
- How is she now?
- Yes, nothing like, lies all day.
- Did you call the doctor?
- No, son, nothing serious, do not worry. She drank her blood pressure medication, and her condition seemed to stabilize.
- M-yes, the spring period apparently?
- After all, every time at this time and in the fall, the pressure does not let us forget about itself.
- Do not do what I tell you all the time: one of the main causes of pressure is dehydration of the body, during the day you must definitely drink a little at least two liters of water. And you don't listen to me.
- And how to drink, son, when you don't feel like it at all?
- And I suppose you want to drink wine and do not deny yourself this?
- Well, it's me, well, but my mother doesn't drink.
But he doesn't drink enough water either.
- Okay, son, I'll go take care of it.
- Has she eaten anything today?
- Yes, we have enough food, thank God and thank you.
- I know what kind of eaters you are. If I come to you, what can I bring you?
- You don't need anything, son.

we have everything. Better go home, to your family, they need you there more, and we will sort it out here ourselves, and if anything is necessary, we will call you.

- Well, father, hello from me to mom, and hang in there.

Half an hour later, the administrator's Ferrari was driving away from the head office, and after the same amount of time he was already driving at high speed along the central highway connecting the capital with the western cities and villages of the country.

Turning onto a country dirt road, the car forcedly and sharply slowed down.

- It is impossible to get to your own people in this car, - a thought flashed through my head, - we need to think about a new one.

Before anyone else, the owner's approach was felt by his dog, which lost its peace and began, whining, to stagger around the yard. And the more the distance between them decreased, and the more approached the time of their meeting, the more restless her behavior became.

- Rex, my dear, - the driver stroked the dog that met the owner.

The dog impatiently jumped at the owner, wagging its tail and whining at the same time, as if trying to tell him something important.

- All right, all right, Rex, calm down, we'll talk some more, - the owner reassured the dog, quickly moving from the entrance gate of the yard to the door of his three-story country house.

- I could not restrain myself after all and came, - an elderly man of eighty years old with rolled up sleeves of home outerwear met the embraces of the entered man.

- Hello, father, how is she?

- All right, son, all right, - I told you that there is nothing dangerous, and that you don't have to come.

- Well, it's true that I have two mothers? Hello mother.

- Have you come yet? We told you that there is no urgent need for this, - answered the mother lying in bed, - apart from my constant desire to see you.

- What should I do, Lela refuses to come here, preferring life in the city, but I can't be torn into two parts, you understand me, don't you?

"Of course, I understand, son," the mother stroked the small bangs on the forehead of her son, who sat down by her bed.

- Koba knows about what happened, - the son asked, carefully examining the bandage on his mother's knee.

- No, we didn't tell him why. Nothing serious after all, but to come here from the area is far away for him, let him take care of his family, - mother stood up for her second son.

- Who did the bandage, disinfected the wound well?

"All right, all right, be calm, our neighbor cleaned it and bandaged it, and tomorrow she will come again for dressing," explained the father, who was standing at the door of the room in which his wife was lying.

- What did happen, can you tell me more?

- Yes, last night I watched a program, Nanukino show, in which poor families and hungry children were shown, this program had a great effect on her, she worried all night, slept badly, fiddled in the kitchen in the morning, and then, exhausted, walked through the garden until she stumbled fell and hurt her knee.

- Mom, dad, how many times do I need to ask you the same thing so that you don't watch this opposition channel. Should I smash this box so you don't watch it? Watch normal government channels, they have much more truth and positive. In the city with Lela I have fights on this score, but here with you. Even if it's true, what do they show that you can fix, besides harming your health?

- At the end of our street there is also more than one needy family, so your mother is very sorry for them, she often goes to them and helps.

The elderly mother nodded her head in agreement.

- Yes, for God's sake, it's very good, to whom you can and as much as you can, of course, you need to help, mom, but please do it, it's not to the detriment of your health. Do you think someone else's well-being is more important than the well-being of your children and grandchildren?

"Of course not, son," the mother confirmed.

- Yes, in the morning she still had pressure, maybe because of this she fell.

- Come on, I'll take your blood pressure now, Mom.

- Don't, son, I already feel good, the main thing is that you are next to me, and when you are with me, you know, I'm not afraid of anything.

The captopril tablet still had to be given to the mother after the control measurement of pressure.

- Son, maybe go with your father to the kitchen, eat something? - suggested the mother, - and then you're right from work, I suppose, hungry?

Bezhan remembered the missed break and dutifully went with his father to the kitchen. After a hearty dinner, the father enthusiastically showed his son the seasonal work he was doing in the garden.

- And here is our new seedlings, seedlings of fruit and fruit trees, - the father boasted, walking around the sown areas with his son.

From a fenced enclosure at the end of the garden came the quacking of domestic ducks grazing along with several chickens.

- And here are our new guests, - the elderly father introduced two piglets who had been bought, who, grunting friendly to the owner, simultaneously tried to get to know him and get to know him, and begged him for at least something edible.

- They are hungry, father, look how they puff and poke their noses on the net.

- No, I fed them before your arrival, Bezhan, and now they are complaining about me to you, a new person.

- What are small and eagles, but what will happen when they grow up?

- When they grow up, they themselves will get to our table, - explained the father.

- The aviary of chickens and ducks will probably still have to be separated by the father?

- I think so too, but still I was waiting for an agreement with you, - my father agreed, - I already bought the nets and metal pipes and put them in the basement.

"Yes, yes, certainly, of course, we can even do this business now," the son agreed.

- Can we make it? And then, you're probably tired from work?

- What we have time, we have time, and what we don't, we will finish in the morning.

"Well, if it's so good then," the father agreed and, taking his son by the elbow, led him to the basement of the country house, where he kept the tools necessary for successful gardening, as well as materials for installing a new aviary.

The four-legged faithful friend Rex did not leave his owners for a minute and, constantly wagging his tail, got underfoot.

It was getting to dusk, and it was necessary to have time to do at least the initial part of the work planned jointly by father and son.

XVII

To Mikhail's great surprise, the unknown efforts of his brother-in-law and former boss Vano paid off, and he was left at work, albeit with a final warning.

And it was possible to replace the burnt servers with not very large expenses for new and most advanced ones. And in fact, technology is very much subject to the harsh machinations of time and constantly requires its updating.

And if this problem is much easier to solve for a reputable company, then it is more difficult when you have to face a similar task yourself, in the conditions of your own home.

The geyser of the water heater suddenly turned off a couple of days ago when bathing an eight-year-old son, I had to urgently heat the water in a bucket to complete the process.

Well, now the geyser repairman explained the reason for its burnout.

- The inlet pipe did not have a rain cap, and drops of rain water got there through it and burned it.

- And now there is no way to repair it?

- No, boss, now just buy a new one, - the speaker repairman explained.

- There's nothing you can do, Maka, you'll have to go to the bank and take out a new loan to purchase it.

- So who will give it to us, after all, we are blacklisted in all banks, have you forgotten, or what?

"Nothing, I have some loopholes on this score," the husband reassured.

"My pension will also arrive soon, son," an elderly woman under eighty hurried to support her family, barely moving around the rooms with the help of her inseparable wooden stick.

- Thank you mom, your pension will come in handy for another, more important matter, and I'll get out somehow. Take better care of the kids.

In the commodity market, Mikhail had to choose a gas water heater for a long time, all the time correlating its price with his financial capabilities. Having opted for a ten-liter column, he managed to arrange a debt installment plan in one more bank.

As soon as he brought her home, in a hurry he intercepted the food offered to him by his wife, and urgently ran out to the public transport stop, where a taxi called from the office was waiting for him. Sitting in the back seat of the car, he gradually came to his senses.

- It's good that at least this help from work, - he began a conversation with the driver, - is a big saving of money and time. And what will happen when quarantine measures are canceled at least partially and public transport is allowed to open? Perhaps your customers will noticeably decrease?

"No, I don't think so," said the driver.

- Why?

- Well, at least because, along with this, the mothballed jobs will be opened, and a new wave of people forced to sit at home will rush back to their jobs.

"Perhaps," Mikhail agreed.

It's interesting how, on almost all foreign cars of your city taxi company, young guys aged from twenty-five to thirty-five work, and almost all of them have higher education.

- And what else to do, uncle, - the young driver confirmed, - when the family is behind, and there is almost no work in the city.

- And if where and to whom you are lucky, then everywhere is a beggarly salary.

- Yes, I agree, I'm with my partner, isn't it? You have to choose between the worst and nothing.

- Although our information age offers along with new challenges and new opportunities.

- It's always been that way. Over time, now you have to not only walk, but already run in step, otherwise Khan.

- Yes, the information-computer age opens up new colossal opportunities.

- I agree, but sometimes it is difficult to turn off the track you have traveled.

- How are you with the computer? Mikhail asked.

- Yes, of course. Few people now do not know how to work on the Internet.

- Why am I asking, is there one good Internet project that could offer you, - Mikhail said uncertainly, not believing in the success of this business, since he was in fact closely connected with MLM.

But without new partners and their activity, it was impossible to make money in it yourself, and therefore the need pushed him to such actions.

- Here I am, together with my partner, I must say, we have been working quite successfully in this project for several years now, and we also have our own team of partners. If you are interested, can I give you a business card with the corresponding link for free registration of your back office and entry into it?

- Let me see, - the young driver agreed, - what will I need to do?

- And the same thing that I did now, to give information to people. This business is more informational.

- It's not a financial pyramid by any chance?

- No, what are you. This is a European company, and in Europe people are legally responsible for this.

- And then I heard a lot from my parents, how their generation at one time, as they say, was cut to zero and robbed almost completely.

- No, this is absolutely excluded in our country, I say, after all, a very decent foreign company with ten years of experience in the Internet. And then you can google it or type it in a YouTube search engine and learn more about it all.

- Well, I'll take a look, - agreed the driver, taking a colored business card from Mikhail, - thank you.

- Drive along the new road, and then approaching the patrol post, flash emergency lamps three times, and if asked, then say that you are bringing their own security colleague to our company, otherwise they will not let you through.

Grigory, the guard on duty at the lower part of the office, managed to salute Mikhail at attention, who had not yet had time to get off the car.

- Gregory, why such officiality? - Michael dropped, - we already managed to make friends, or what?

- Of course, Misha, what are we talking about, just an old military habit.

- Well, okay, - Mikhail agreed, - we'll meet later after going around the office.

- That's right, - Grigory reported, once again demonstrating his commitment to the old military commands.

Having passed an independent thermal screening in the empty reception of the first floor and writing down the indicators in a special report card, Mikhail went to his room on the seventh floor of the office.

The empty rooms and corridors of the office no longer burdened his soul, as before, but on the contrary, they were now for him, a kind of refuge from life's problems, they gave him some kind of peace of mind.

"Every person should have at least one such shelter in order not to go crazy," a thought flashed through his head.

After a long lull, unexpected explosions followed, reducing all past calm vigils to absolute zero.

More than once, therefore, in such cases, Mikhail had mental breakdowns, expressed in an almost final and firm decision to leave work, but then, over time, everything somehow, by itself, settled down, and his duty again poured into a calm peaceful channel.

A phone call on an internal and city landline interrupted his travels on one of the top rating sites on the Internet.

- How did you get to work, Misha?

- Thank you, Maka, while alive, - the answer of the spouse was heard.

- Alive, but hungry.

- Why, I had time to eat.

- These snacks will bring you to the handle one day, Misha.

- And what else can I do with our rhythm of life?

- I don't know, Misha, I told you more than once to have something at work or take it with you, follow the example of Sandro, he does that.

- Yeah, and that's why he has constant showdowns with the owners of refrigerators.

- Do you have anything to eat now?

- Bread and tea, and what else does a person need if he is very hungry?

- Bread, from it your stomach and sides grow.

- Then you need to live in the countryside in order to consume environmentally friendly food, and this is possible only in conditions of uncontaminated soil.

- Is there anything wrong with our land?

- I told you more than once that only because of the accidents of nuclear power plants, radioactive clouds go around the globe several times.

- I don't know, Misha, but just as you want to have a slender wife, so I want to have the same husband.

- Just look, huh? - Michael objected, - you need to think about this when your relatives invite me to a feast and you have to drink wine from the horns of the river there.

There was a short female giggle in the receiver.

- Why are you giggling?

- I just remembered that this weekend my brother invites us to his son's birthday party.

- Well, please.

- What, please, Misha, at least at these feasts you refuel for a long time and these reserves and live your life.

- Well, yes, of course, I've been living like a camel for a long time, as in the gentlemen of fortune, I ate and drank with your relatives, and in a hungry life, romance.

- So what? Mac continued to giggle.

- I'm sorry, what?

- What should I tell my brother, are we going to visit them this Saturday-Sunday in the village?

- This weekend I'm on duty in the office, you know very well.

- So what, call Alexander and ask him to change your days of duty.

- So now it's not only necessary to ask him, but also to inform Dali, and I'm already up to their necks with my requests.

- My brother will be very offended if we are not at his birthday party for his first child.

- All right, all right, I'll call Sandro, if only he can?

Having received Alexander's consent to change duty, Mikhail continued his travels across the Internet ocean.

His attention is now drawn to videos about the quick and inexpensive construction of farm greenhouses. Fascinated by watching one of these videos, he barely heard the Skype call.

- Yes, Fima, I'm listening to you, - Mikhail answered his sponsor from far abroad.

- Hello, Misha, how are you, how are you.

- Oh, don't ask, Fima, we are deaf, like in a tank, on all fronts, hunger, unemployment, and hence the lack of money.

- Well, who's to blame if you don't want to work?

- We wish something, Fima, we distribute information together with Alexander wherever possible, and distribute business cards with links right and left, but people here are somehow skeptical about this.

- Well, because you need to have good results yourself, and then show them to your potential partners.

- And how to have them without them, Fima, this is MLM. I recently read an ad on the Internet by one of the applicants for at least some work on the network with a note that sex and MLM should not be offered.

- Well then advertise our achievements.

- Yes, we are doing everything, Fima, we are doing it, but so far everything has been ineffective.

- And what about Alexander and Shota?

- All the same, while marking time.

- And you do not trample, but continue to work not working around, you can see for yourself what a great promotion the company offered us.

Suddenly, the internal phone rang.

- Misha, here from our security service they call and say that the alarm has turned on, they ask if everything is in order with us?

- How could she turn on, if I have not yet bypassed the office and did not put it on the alarm, Grigory?

- I don't know, I'm just saying what they told me.

- Okay, I'll go down to you now.

- Introduce yourself, who are you? - demanded the operatives of the city security service, who managed to arrive at the scene in a service foreign car.

- Retired colonel, now an employee of your security service Grigory.

“Mikhail, an employee of the internal security of the office,” his colleague introduced himself.

- Well, we are familiar with you, Mikhail, but with Grigory. Are you new to our service?

- No, I'm already working.

- Then why are you meeting us out of uniform and did not clearly explain the reason for the alarm? one of the two security officers asked. “You know what time it is now,” added the second, “pogroms of shops, offices, warehouses have become more frequent in the city and throughout the country as a whole.

- Commander, there is no need to lean on our colonel, he is a hero of military conflicts and fulfills all the requirements of the company, and the little things regarding uniforms are not so significant.

- Don't interfere Michael, let the colonel answer for himself, - suggested one of the guards.

- I'm sorry, commander, about the uniform, it got hot and took it off for a while, but about the alarm, just ask Mikhail himself, he hasn't even set the alarm on the office yet.

- Yes, that's how it is, - Mikhail confirmed, - apparently, it was the alarm from the warehouse that turned on.

- And I checked the outer doors, everything is in order with them, you can check it yourself, - Grigory explained.

- And what then could set off the alarm?

- Yes, the warehouse is full of mice and rats, perhaps, cats make their way through the side window, and the alarm is shouting.

- And why don't you pour medicine from mice and rats.

- Well, here's another thing, it's none of our business, we're just watchmen, we were ordered to guard our points.

The explanation continued for some more time, after which the employees of the city security service left the facility.

“It's as if they have nothing to do,” Mikhail remarked with displeasure.

- They can also be understood, the company is one of their largest customers, only from you they receive six hundred lari from each of the three of us working here, - Grigory explained, - what is it like? Naturally, that is why they are so afraid of losing this object and value it so much.

It's good if they come only in the evening, and even at night they come several times.

- And why do they need to travel at night, Grigory, do you all have radio communication? Mikhail asked.

- Trust, but also verify - such is their principle, - Grigory smiled. - And at the same time, maybe they will catch us in something else in order to rip off fines from us for the slightest miscalculations. So I think they will also withhold a fine from me for the form.

- Just go crazy, - Mikhail was indignant, - no one wants to work with us, but how to snatch money from each other, we are champions in this.

- My son recently reminded me of a story that I told him earlier.

- What, Gregory?

"Eighty kilometers from our city, in the regions of the rocky mountains, there lives a proud and predatory bird from the breed of eagles," Grigory said after a short pause.

- Well...

- So, this bird is called "karitkaniya" - windbreaker in translation into Russian. Michael's eyes widened in surprise.

"It can't be," is it called so foul-mouthed?

- Yes, yes, if you don't believe me, you can google and find this bird on the Internet.

- Wow, what a person in this world will not hear.

- Dolboeb, asshole, mudozvon - heard, but here's the windbreaker for the first time, by golly.

- Well, Misha, this bird, having the ability to hunt like an eagle, having all the properties and capabilities of an eagle, is a big lazy person. Having chosen a stone protruding in a rocky area, she sits down in an eagle pose and, opening her beak towards the wind stream, waits for the food driven by the wind to fall into her beak.

- Wow, - Mikhail was surprised, - well, if the weather is calm or the wind blows food past his beak, then what?

- Then she waits patiently, and if she does not wait, she will die. Many of us, unfortunately, began to resemble such eagles. The ambitions are big, but we often forget that you can't pull the fish out of the pond without effort.

- Do not say, Grigory, absolutely, - Mikhail agreed with him, - we complain that there is no work, and if you think carefully, you can find it everywhere, in every region.

- That's right, Misha.

- Well, at least in our joint Internet business with Alexander. We tell everyone, we offer, but many do not trust him, refuse him.

- It is not for nothing that our wise old folk proverb says that any, even empty, vain work is better than sitting idle on the spot.

- Eh, Gregory, we still partly relate to the people of the old subjugation and remember the price of labor and how our ancestors cherished and valued it. But the current generation...

- Yes, that's right, Misha, it grows on completely different ideals and prices. news.

- Although, you know, here in our company, the younger generation works very hard, works hard and fruitfully, but is it only with us?

- We all seem to be walking in some kind of mysterious circle, convincing each other that what is the salary, such is the work. And this partly justifies the situation, but only partly.

- Yes, Alexander and I, for example, have been asking the authorities for a long time to increase our salary, at least by fifty lari a month. And they - in any. Judging by today's dollar exchange rate, we do not count as much as fifty dollars, which is equivalent to one hundred and fifty lari.

- Eh, - Grigory drawled, - a simple hard worker always had a hard time.

- Well, it's okay, if this meager salary would go for meager labor, it's not yet, everyone and sundry put sticks in the wheels, and you constantly have to fight.

- Well, yes, - Grigory agreed, - after all, before my current rank of colonel, I followed exactly this path. And along the way, how many trips I had, specially rigged traps, slander, persecution.

- Eh, dear George, all this, as they say, is talk in favor of the poor.

"And things are still there," Grigory shook his head affirmatively.

A leisurely tour of the office ended with a call to the city security service.

The Internet horoscope promised not an easy, but rather productive day, which inspired a lot of optimism on the night before its onset.

XVIII

The necessary sound reproduction from Alexander's working computer was absent for a long time, and therefore the sound from it could only be received through headphones.

Suddenly, a small rectangular window popped up on the monitor screen with a photograph of Thea.

Alexander hurriedly pushed away all unnecessary things from the table and, convulsively grabbing the computer mouse, quickly pressed the desired button.

"Hello," Thea's weak voice was heard.

"Hello," Alexander replied, as if not expecting to hear her.

- How are you doing?

- I'm nothing, as befits old single men. And how are you?

"I don't know," Thea drawled.

- Something happened?

- No, nothing special, just tomorrow I'm going for another transfusion procedure under the chemotherapy program and I don't know if I'll undergo it again or not?

- What does it mean to transfer or not, of course, you will transfer, not for the first time, after all. When will tomorrow be?

- In the third.

- Well, you see, it means that this time everything will be ok.

"I don't know, Sandro," the woman burst into tears suddenly, "it seems to me that I won't be able to bear this nightmare.

- Calm, calm, dear, do not be afraid of anything, all your surroundings are here and there, be sure, next to you.

"I hope so," Thea continued through her weeping. - And my husband, and my mother-in-law, and their friends do so much for me that I can never thank them for all this goodness. I don't even know what I would have done without their help.

- Well, you see, how good it is, God bless them all.

- Forgive me, Sandro, for our last conversation, I was unfairly rude to you then.

"Nothing happens, never mind," he tried to console Thea.

"It's just because you are still in my heart, I can't throw you out of there, not to forget and not to forgive.

- Thea, so what's the problem, dear, consider me your distant relative and try to transfer our relationship to these rails, - Alexander tried to teach Thea, which was difficult for him.

- I can't, Sandro, you understand, I can't, - Thea burst into tears even more, - after our farewell kiss, you entered my soul. I'm tired of fighting with myself, and then there's this damn chemotherapy in addition.

- Why can't a man be a relative? Alexander asked in amazement.

- You don't understand this, the female soul is dark, Sandro.

Yes, it's hard to disagree with that.

Even I sometimes find it difficult to understand myself.

- I understand, Thea, I understand you perfectly, there are things in life that do not depend on us.

- And then after talking with you, I don't want anyone and nothing else in the world, you know?

- I understand, - sadly Alexander confirmed.

- But I can't betray, change and leave my husband, because he loves me very much and has done too much for me. That's why I sometimes avoid you.

Now tears welled up in Alexander's eyes.

- Forgive me, dear.

- And you forgive me and try, try very hard to transfer our communication to another plane, as between ordinary friends and relatives, you promise?

"I'll try," sobbed a trembling female voice.

- Well, that's good, otherwise you know me, a wanderer wandering around the Internet, sometimes I stumble upon such interesting materials that I can't help but share with my friends and especially with you. Understand me too, my joy, I live by you and I don't have a more important person on our entire planet than you.

It seemed to him that Thea's sobbing voice agreed with him.

- Well, that's great, we choose with you the golden mean in our relations, so that, as they say, both the wolves are fed and the sheep are safe, ok? Well, judge for yourself, Thea, it's impossible that in the life of any woman there would be only one man - her husband, and where should the rest of the brothers, sons, fathers, friends, relatives and so on go, isn't it?

“True,” Thea agreed, smiling through her tears, “only at the end without “and so on,” followed a slight laugh.

- Of course, as you wish, my dear.

- I'm afraid of tomorrow, Sandro.

- Why, dear?

- After a transfusion, I feel very bad for one or two days, I can hardly breathe and literally suffocate. And I need to do eight more procedures, and so once a year, at least, I can't stand that much, Sandro.

- Do not think about future procedures, Thea, think now only about tomorrow and remember all the time that I am with you.

- Thank you very much, Sandro. Last time we discussed the issues of happiness and paradise, and so, paradise and happiness are human health, there is nothing more expensive in the world, believe me. I can now imagine how hard it is for those who are sick with coronavirus, since they have such difficulty breathing for more than one week.

Yes, things are not going well with the coronavirus. But as for your problem, I also took up its study very seriously. I probably heard about the Italian doctor Simancini, who claimed that oncology can be treated with baking soda, look on the Internet, Tea.

- Oh, I don't care if I die - let me die, only what will happen to my family later, that's what worries me the most, maybe I myself will interrupt this course of chemotherapy.

- Stop talking nonsense

and do you hear? What unheard of selfishness, think of your loved ones. Which of us belongs only to ourselves?

- I'm tired of everything in this world, Sandro.

“Leave me alone so that I don't hear such words from you again.” Let's think together about how to get out of this difficult situation. By the way, what else have I heard about our problem, it turns out that the P / H balance in the human body plays an important role in it. Have you heard anything about him?

- Yes, I heard.

- It turns out that it should be seven or more in the body when an alkaline environment is created in which all cancer cells die over time.

“That's the kind of thing they give me medical transfusions.

- Well, that's great, dear, please be patient a little more for the sake of your family members and loved ones, for me.

- I don't know Sandro, I don't know if I can?

- You can! – affirmatively ordered Alexander.

- All right, Sandro, I'll go to sleep, my eyes are closing.

- Go in peace, dear, good night and good luck to you tomorrow, I will pray for you.

- Thank you very much, if that do not forget me. And look after my household.

- Necessarily!

How strongly his being owns the consciousness of a person, - Alexander was surprised, and how strongly it determines consciousness, changing his actions, sometimes at such a catastrophic speed that you are amazed at the change in a person without even having time to blink an eye.

And then, a completely different person appears in front of you in the old guise, but fundamentally different from the one you knew before.

And how can one not argue with the author of the book - "Games that people play" by Eric Berne that in fact life itself and the being that has developed around a person sometimes play them.

Suddenly, a call rang out with the name of the caller on the mobile phone, the company's system programmer.

"Yes, Beka, I'm listening to you," Alexander replied.

- Sandro, are you on duty in the office today?

- Yes, why?

- We need your help here.

- I'll try if I can.

- Please come down to me on the fifth floor, there are two hard drives on the desktop, the one with a volume of one terabyte needs to be placed in the reader and turn on the "team viewer" program on the computer so that I can enter it from home remotely.

- No problem, Beka, I'll do everything right now.

- Thank you very much, otherwise the urgent work appeared, and it is not possible to come to the office at this late hour with our curfew, you know.

- Now everything will be done. When I go down to your room, I will call you from there, I still have unlimited calls.

- Yeah, okay, just one more thing, you don't happen to have a vatsap, viber or messenger, so that I could tell you more specifically what to do and how to do it via video link so that you don't suffer.

- No, Beka, you know that my mobile phone is outdated, and new versions of these programs are not downloaded, the fourth category, but at least the tenth is needed. But I couldn't buy a new mobile phone, remember, I couldn't pull it with finances.

- Yes, I remember, - Beka chuckled, - well, then we have to rely only on your ingenuity and resourcefulness.

- I'll try right now, and as soon as I'm on the spot, I'll contact you right away.

- Good, I'll wait for your call.

Having quickly dealt with the request of the company's system programmer, Alexander returned to his office.

He refueled with a large cup of hot Herbalife tea and sat down at his favorite working computer, not tired of admitting to himself that he had never received as

much necessary knowledge as from the Internet in his life either at school, or at the institute, or even at the Academy of Sciences.

“Oh, if I had such a technique at hand then, in my youth, how much I would have achieved in my life,” Alexander was annoyed to himself, “and now, at my age and in my position as a lonely old bachelor, about so much in life has to think and face, grieving over the many missed opportunities in life.

No, after all, one life is insanely small in order to live a great, full and comprehensive life in this world, sometimes forgetting how much time we waste in life, - Alexander was perplexed.

Pretty tired and exhausted from wandering around the endless expanses of the Internet, by midnight Alexander took a nap in his chair, throwing his legs on the table. But neither in a dream nor in reality did he manage to hide from the constant harassment of phone calls, Skype and other means of communication.

Constant calls were the inevitable scourge of his life. And now, in a dream, he dreamed of an audible call.

- Hello, Sandro, dear, how are you? asked the voice of a classmate from the capital of the former country of the Soviets.

“Hi,” the voice said in the dream.

- Are you sleeping, or what?

- Yes, why?

How can you sleep at work? You're a night watchman, and you need to stay awake at night.

- That's just you and I missed my head, Bezhan, you have nothing to do at such a time to call me? – objected offended Alexander.

- No, I call my employees in my office from time to time so that they would not fall asleep, and so I decided to check you at the same time for wakefulness, a classmate chuckled. - And sometimes I even come to them to check and at night. So imagine, out of fear, some even learned to sleep on duty with their eyes open.

And in the morning, Alexander was waiting for a tour and the opening of the company's office, sending a report to the authorities on the duty.

So they were on duty together with Mikhail, alternately. But on Saturday and Sunday they had to be on duty for almost three days in a row.

And neither the violation of labor law norms, nor the question of the working day norms, long postponed in the country's parliament, nor the repeated requests of Alexander and Mikhail, and even more so, neither the decision of the European Court on classifying the time of travel to and from work as the main working time, did not affect the leaders of the private sector. companies in terms of at least a meager increase in wages.

Freedom of enterprise has long been thrown into the dustbin of the founding principles of the former Soviet country, such as the mandatory eight-hour work day, free education and health care, and many more of its gains.

On the way home, Alexander involuntarily remembered the Chinese curse about how a person wanted to live in times of change.

- We were raised and prepared for a completely different life, - he confessed to Mikhail by phone, - but we ended up in a completely different one.

“And the values of a past life are much more priority for us,” Mikhail agreed with him.

Not commensurate with the salary of two friends, the prices in the bazaar and in grocery stores pushed them to all sorts of tricks. I had to compare prices for products in different city locations and wholesale outlets.

As soon as he got home with his purchases, Alexander, exhausted from sleepless night duty, began to settle down to home life.

Having laid out the brought food in the kitchen, he first of all hastened to ventilate the rooms by opening all the windows.

On the balcony of the fourth floor, he noticed how workers were scurrying about in the yard, carrying out earthworks for the rehabilitation and construction of a new sewer line of the five-story building in which he lived.

In a long earthen trench up to two meters deep, dug by an excavator, a special corrugated pipe with a diameter of twenty centimeters and a length of four and a half meters was laid from the left sewer well, and the place for the same length of pipe, to the right well, was filled along the entire length, fine gravel.

The work fuss in the yard interested Alexander and, despite his fatigue, he decided to watch the workers below.

To his great amazement, the right pipe was not attached to the left long pipe, but a pipe thrown separately into the trench, on the left side of the sewer line between the wells, suddenly began to fill up with soil. Moreover, the soil falling on the pipe thrown into the trench began to fall into the internal cavity.

Soon the foreman joined the first worker, commanding the excavator to fill the trench with soil.

Fatigue from the almost sleepless night duty crippled Alexander so much that he didn't even have a proper breakfast, fell into bed and immediately gave himself up to sleep.

By the end of the day, going back to work, Alexander asked the workers where their foreman was and what his name was.

- Tamaz, hello, the workers told me that you are in charge here, - he turned to the foreman, who was about to go home. - I have a couple of questions for you about your work today.

“I hear you,” the foreman said meekly.

- That there was another one under the covered pipe?

- No, chief, - Tamaz began to explain, - there was no second floor, and the pipeline line was solid, it just seemed to you.

- Nothing seemed to me, the soil began to fall into the inner cavity of the pipe after your filling, - Alexander opposed.

- No, let's go to the place and I'll explain everything to you right away. Here is the left well and one end of the pipe sticking out down there, see? But let's go to the right well, - closing the massive metal cover of the well, the foreman explained.

The disputants went to the right sewer well, opening its cover, the foreman pointed to the second end of the right pipe, which goes out.

- You see, - the foreman convincingly explained, - two wells and two exits into them at the base of the two ends from one inseparable sewer network.

Alexander thought about it.

- Are you kidding, how could I not connect these two separate pipes into a single, inseparable network, this is a matter of jurisdiction, and for this I would have been in prison. Let's go to where the pipes for another part of the sewer network are stored, and using their example, I will explain to you how they are connected - the foreman said and dragged Alexander along.

"It will be for me now, a doctor of sciences, this ignoramus to explain how such pipes are connected to each other," Alexander was indignant to himself, "I will have to pretend to be a fool in front of him," he agreed to the proposal of the superintendent and followed him.

There was no point in proving his offense to the foreman, and besides, the time of departure for work was very pressing.

But having sat comfortably in the minibus, on the way to work, Alexander succumbed to reflections.

- So, it turns out that the left and right pipes not only were not connected inens, so they still differ in their levels.

Bastards, they decided to wet and thereby weaken the foundation of the soil under my house, and then the foundation shrinkage, cracks in the building and then with the aim of extra fees from the residents due to the accident rate of the building.

Arriving at work, Alexander hurried to get through to his neighbor, who manages the housing cooperative of his building.

- Zauri, hello, - Alexander began his speech, - you are aware of the work in our yard on the construction of a new sewer network.

- Yes, but what, something happened?

- At least someone oversees the implementation.

- Of course, - the manager explained, - I myself watched in the morning how they were stretching the net under the windows, your loggia.

- When it was Zauri, what time.

- By ten o'clock in the morning.

- So, exactly at ten minutes to four days I watched them and saw a completely different picture.

Alexander to the smallest detail outlined what he saw.

- This simply can not be, I myself watched them in the morning.

- And I'm telling you, it was exactly as I told you.

Several calls to other neighbors had the same outcome as the first.

- But what is it, are they all conspiring against me? Alexander was outraged.

The next morning, he wrote several applications at once: to the mayor's office, to the district administration and to the water and sewerage company, and spent the whole day submitting these applications himself.

In the statements, he did not indicate the name of the criminal foreman, as well as the senior foreman protecting him, but simply asked for an urgent correction of the shortcomings made during construction, with a schematic drawing attached.

In the offices of the relevant departments, Alexander was told that the answers would not be received earlier than two weeks, since they require a meeting of members of commissions that consider citizens' applications.

The district administration added that this work is carried out by a certain city laboratory, to the directorate of which he arrived the next morning.

The deputy who met him in his office boss, a man of respectable age, generously blew kisses to the employees of his department, inattentively listening to Alexander's fears.

Having made a call to the senior foreman, he informed him of the arrival of Alexander.

- Oh, Shalvovich, we know this person, - the voice of the senior foreman was heard over the phone, - I must tell you that this is not a completely adequate person.

- Well, then I'll send him to you, and deal with him yourself, okay? Where are you now?

- At the facility, Shalvovich, near his house.

- Well, that's good, - Shalvovich cut off the connection.

- So, - he turned to Alexander, - I just spoke with the senior foreman and he said that changes were made to the work plan, which I don't know about yet, and therefore go to your home and talk to the foreman, his name is Georgy .

- I have already spoken to him, it is useless, he says in one voice that it all seemed to me, and I am responsible for my words.

- What can I do in this case?

- Where is your office here to leave a statement?

- We do not accept applications from citizens.

- This George of yours said that there is an excavator in our yard and that if I pay him money, he will be able to re-dig this trench for us and see everything in reality. You took seventy-five thousand lari for this work, that is, more than twenty-five thousand dollars, in order to do it properly, and I also have to pay extra, a crazy amount for me?

- Well, then who will believe you in this case?

- Everything is clear with you, - Alexander said touchily, packing his papers in a diplomat.

- I would still advise you to once again talk with the senior foreman, hurry up while he is there.

- And he almost never happens there, just like on the day when his ward Tamaz committed a criminal offense.

- Well, then all the more hurry up, as he is waiting for you.

Going out into the corridor, Alexander was delayed with leaving and heard another conversation between Shalvovich and the same senior foreman.

- Yes, Georgy, it is clear that this person is some kind of intriguer, how many of them today in our time, how could my people commit such a crime when I don't forgive them even a small, left hillock of earth on a trench. But you know that there may be people who will believe him, and then we won't do well, so I have to give you a camera so that you can shoot everything and stick photos in the acceptance certificate of each object.

Alexander rushed to Shalvovich's office to give him an answer for his insults and slander, but then slowed down.

"It doesn't make sense to prove anything to such people," an inner voice told him, "and then, after a fight, they no longer wave their fists."

Saddened by what had happened, Alexander went to the metro station along one of the central streets of the city, which had long ago become the property of foreigners who bought almost all the buildings for restaurants, cafe-bars and other entertainment establishments.

"Our country is being sold and destroyed, and no one cares about that," he soon complained by phone to his employee, about the past and long-abolished academic institute.

- Why are you surprised

I, Alexander, now similar things are happening everywhere. Just imagine, I recently left for the examination of a new overpass built hastily, and what do you think? There is almost no reinforcement in reinforced concrete structures.

- What a horror, how is this possible? Alexander was amazed.

- Imagine what is possible. And in the event of an accident or destruction of structures, a new tender will be appointed, the money will be stolen, and everything will be started up again.

- A disgrace, who in Soviet times would even dare to think about such a thing?

- Here, for example, my friend had the same operation on the thyroid gland twice, removing one node each time, while it was possible to combine it in one operation. And all in order to rip off a double amount from the patient for the same operation. So, dear Alexander, what they fought for, they ran into! But never mind, new elections are just around the corner, let's hope that with them at least something will change for the better both for us and for our country.

- Yes, of course, the whole life is ahead, hope and wait, - Alexander dejectedly objected.

In the evening, in the office, Alexander was watching a news report on one of the opposition TV channels. In one program, the oppositionist showed the state of a prestigious city park, for the rehabilitation and repair of which millions of budget funds were spent.

- Look at what they turned the park into, it's not even safe to walk here now. This is how they win multimillion-dollar tenders, build, improve, and then destroy everything in order to take possession of a new tender, and so several times and for many objects, and this is how they make money.

After listening to a couple more horrifying stories, Alexander turned off this channel so as not to go crazy with the ongoing criminal acts of some high-ranking intruders and tried to take his mind off the music mixes of his favorite tunes.

Late in the evening, making his rounds of the office before closing, he found Katie, who was late at work, solving a difficult programming problem.

The girl was delighted with his appearance and asked Alexander for help.

- Nutsiko promised to come and help me in solving this problem, but household chores and the child delayed her, and here I was left alone with my problems, - she complained to Alexander, finishing her cup of hot coffee.

- It's okay, let's try to cope with your problems together, - Alexander promised and led by a long-legged beauty, he sat down next to her at a computer with two paired monitors.

The joint efforts brought the same positive result, forcing the young blonde to squeal with joy.

- How great, - she clapped her hands happily, - now it will be possible for me to fearlessly report to my boss on the completion of the task. How much I love you, Alexander, you can't even imagine," she continued to squeal with joy and, unable to restrain herself, hung on his neck, wrapping her thin long arms around her and kissing him on the cheek.

- Hooray, - she continued to clap for joy in her hands.

Seeing the young employee through the lower courtyard, Alexander became sad about their impending separation.

- You know, Kathy, in all my life I had only one innermost desire.

- What is it? - cheerfully answered the girl.

- Have a daughter like you.

- How, you still don't have a family?

- No, imagine, in the distant past, I married a divorcee with a triple trailer who promised me to give birth to my child, and three months later she announced that she was not going to do this, since three sons from her first husband were enough for her and what if I truly love her, then I will take her three sons as my own.

- And you?

What kind of man would like such an offer? Some will walk, and others will pay for it.

"Well, yes, of course," Keti agreed, biting her lower lip a little.

- Now, if she agreed to my proposal to have at least one child from me, then, perhaps, I would now have the same beautiful and smart daughter as you.

- Oh, you are my poor thing, - Keti passed the palm of her right hand over his forehead and, very carefully bending down to his cheek, kissed him a second time.

Alexander immediately felt the difference between these two kisses. The first led him to her own childish frequency of joy, and the second poured into him such a huge stream of tenderness that he literally washed away the negative outposts of his soul, built by what he saw and heard in recent days.

- Thank you, daughter, - thanked Alexander. - And how are you, alone or what will you get to the house in these darkness.

Katie nodded her head silently.

- How is it that such a beautiful girl does not still have a good boyfriend?

Kathy shook her head.

- There was at one time, but now they have dispersed.

So, this situation needs to be corrected urgently.

The girl smiled back.

- I forbid you to go alone at night and urgently find a good guy, understand?

Katie continued to smile.

"All my life I dreamed of having a father like you," she suddenly shot him in the face and, pressing his head with both hands and leaning against her chest, kissed him fearfully and abruptly on the lips and started running.

Alexander watched her for a long time but compared his kisses with Thea and caught himself thinking that each kiss had its own taste, smell, color and energy sensations.

It seemed to him that he unwittingly betrayed not so much Thea as his feelings for her.

- This is how it turns out in life, you love one, meet with the second, and you constantly think about the third, - a thought flashed through Alexander.

Malkhaz, who was on duty that evening, reclined on two armchairs, half-asleep watching the television and a monitor with several surveillance cameras turned on at the opposite end of the booth.

- Let him sleep for himself, I won't wake him up, - Alexander thought to himself, - anyway, they will come to us with a check and wake him up, and now let him rest.

Having handed over the closure of the office by phone, Alexander clung to the computer monitor, on the topic of tonight he came across videos from the YouTube site about energy matrices. Light vibrations, as he defined for himself, is a state of harmony, and all the endocrine glands of a person work normally and harmoniously only if they are present.

- That is why one of the commandments says that we love each other as the creator himself loved us. And that the soul of a person, like his body, has its own gymnastics, without which it simply withers away.

Alexander delved into the issues of human energy centers, into his chakras, which have their own sound and color, influence on them with the help of positive emotions, music, why and how your favorite music heals the soul and body of a person thanks to the vibrations of high-frequency and positively charged energetic sounds.

- Indeed, - Alexander agreed with the materials revealed to him, - after all, it is not without reason that in modern medicine there is a fashionable direction called music therapy.

- Here, it turns out, how important it is for a person to be in high-frequency vibrations, - Alexander concluded for himself, - this turns out to have an impact on the P / H index in the human body.

And the crowning discovery for Alexander was the definition of love he found on the Internet by the bio-physical health workers of the world: love between people is nothing more than a combination of vibrations of the same frequency of souls of people who love each other, namely souls, not hearts, and that the energy of love - powerful energy for a person, capable of moving even the largest mountains, and that with love, any hardships of life are feasible for a person.

All the knowledge newly discovered for himself that dead of night, he involuntarily tried on to Keti's unexpected kiss, which, as it seemed to him, dampened his feelings for Thea.

He fearfully caught himself thinking how little in this life depends on a person, and especially on a man.

“Perhaps Thea is right when she says that men are ruled by women.

“Weak, yes,” an inner voice opposed him.

Far after midnight, Alexander lay down on a hard wooden couch made by Enveri and with great pleasure began to plunge into a short, until early morning, sleep.

XIX

Sunday was almost no different from a work day. Unless on that day it was possible to spend the night at home, in bed, next to a foreigner husband, and then, when he, a sailor, had a similar opportunity.

These were the happiest moments in his life, and even being tired, he tried to spend more time in the company of his wife, who endowed him with a gentle charm of love and charm.

- Mom, today we are waiting for the return of Ion, and therefore I will cook in the kitchen with you today, okay? Jonah loves exactly my blanks, you know about it.

- All right, Thea, and I'll help you then. What did he ask you before the last departure, what to cook for him?

- Well, of course, his favorite dish is lentils, mother. After all, this is not only tasty, but also healthy food, rich in fiber and folic acid, as well as a large amount of vegetable protein.

It also stimulates metabolism, improves immunity and, most importantly, normalizes and improves the functioning of the genitourinary system.

- Oh, you, such a minx, - the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law laughed for a couple.

"In that case, this dish will also be useful for my husband," the seventy-year-old woman of medium height and strong build continued to laugh.

- Well, for your husband, his very name is enough for this, isn't it? - maintained mood Thea.

- Oh, yes, my Zeus has more than enough strength for this, despite his advanced age.

Are you discussing your men again? - suddenly looked in response to the loud female laughter - father-in-law.

- And you better not eavesdrop on us, Zeus, but would go to the port to repair your yacht, otherwise you haven't played us on it for a long time.

"Didn't I tell you, Doris, that she's been in the line for a long time and can't wait for your visit."

- That's great, then take us all for a walk through the expanses of our coastal sea after dinner?

- After dinner it will be hot, Doris, better in the evening, at the same time we will go fishing from the yacht, if possible, - the father-in-law blinked an eye.

- Not a bad idea, - Thea agreed, - on this occasion, today we will enrich our menu with other dishes, - she promised.

- Oh .., - the father-in-law drawled, rubbing his hands in anticipation of a delicious dinner, - and what kind of dishes will they be? he asked.

- Well, of course, first of all, our traditional moussaka, chickpea hummus and gyros salad with tzatziki sauce.

- Oh, I don't remember something, by chance today is not someone's birthday, - the father-in-law cheered up with joy.

"Ours, common, since everyone is waiting for our son Jonah, and you, if you want to meet him with dignity, go to the market for groceries and buy the necessary ingredients for these dishes," the mother-in-law commanded.

- Yes, but which ones? the father-in-law asked.

"Take a list on the table in the hall and go to the market with it," the mother-in-law suggested, and wiping her hands on the kitchen apron, she added, "Let's go together, I'll take another look at this list.

Rico, white and fluffy, a four-legged friend of the family, has been restlessly running around the rooms of a country, two-story luxury villa since the very morning.

Most of all, he liked to spin around with the mistresses and get under their feet in the kitchen, hoping for an additional bonus in the form of small portions of food, because he was already pretty tired of special dog food, in the form of dry and small granules.

One had only to wonder how, along with gluttony, he still managed to maintain optimal weight.

And now, sitting on his hind legs and wagging his tail with difficulty, he looked plaintively at Thea, begging her for another portion of delicacy.

- Well, why are you so gluttonous with me? Thea said.

In response, Riko twirled on the spot even more and started whining as he licked Thea's face.

- Come to me, my beloved, - she took him into her arms, - what would I do without you?

Riko was almost the only companion of Thea's life, with whom she spent most of her time in a foreign land.

She even took him to work and communicated with him as with a friend, trusting him even with her most intimate and secret secrets.

Riko, feeling the special affection of the young mistress, reciprocated her.

His special need manifested itself in difficult moments for Thea's health, when, after the next course of chemotherapy, she felt very ill for several days and exhausted, with difficulty breathing, hugged her four-legged friend in bed more and more.

Sometimes it seemed to her that she loved her pet more than her second husband Jonah, since she had never given so many kisses on the lips and gentle feminine caresses in her life to any man and constantly told him. What would I do without you, my love.

- Rico, you're hanging around in the kitchen again and get in the way, right? Go to your restless little dog, - the mother-in-law, who returned to the kitchen, was angry with him.

Riko seemed to ask Thea with his eyes for permission to obey the elder mistress, and having received it, with an imperceptible nod of Thea's head in sign of consent, lowering his head with a farewell waving of his tail, he retired to the next room.

- You are not very burdensome fuss in the kitchen with me, daughter? - inquired with eyelid.

- No, what are you, mom, I'm getting ready to meet Jonah today, so I want to please him and meet him with dignity.

- Yes, but you still need to put yourself in order.

Thea smiled back at her.

- You are already a beautiful daughter, but you know, the eyes of men are their main instrument of love, I think that a little makeup and an updated hairstyle with a hairdryer after a shower could help you, and always remember that we will

constantly have to win competition in beauty and femininity among overseas women, with whom seafarers have to meet.

“I understand you perfectly, Mom, thank you,” Thea chuckled.

- I am so grateful to you, daughter, for everything, otherwise Jonah's first wife frayed his nerves. And to endure a grouchy wife, even for the sake of a child, in some cases is not justified.

- Of course, mother, in our homeland, there is even a proverb on this subject: where there is no better place, they diverge better.

- Well, it's good that she allows him to see her daughter. Oh, how difficult it is to live with dislike and endure constant squabbles and proceedings, the mother-in-law complained.

- I understand you perfectly, mother.

- You are also a mother, daughter, and you will perfectly be able to understand me that a mother's heart is able to feel everything even at a distance. So I feel, for example, that in your face my son has found a quiet and calm haven, and if someday he has some kind of affair on the side, then please do not be offended by him. You know, after all, we women cannot change or understand the male nature until the end. Although I understand that this is not always possible and not every woman succeeds. But at the same time, a woman always feels with whom her chosen one is with her soul, and with whom only with her body, isn't it so, daughter?

- Ideal, of course, when both soul and body, - Thea smiled.

- Well, where and what in this world is so perfect daughter, as we would like. Mine, for example, also irritated me quite a lot, an unfortunate womanizer, but deep down I still love him, and he hopes me too, otherwise I would not have tolerated my dictation and debriefing even over trifles.

- Of course, mother, he undoubtedly loves you, I feel it too.

- How nice to hear it from you, daughter, thank you.

The father-in-law, who soon returned with his purchases, was more pleased with the drink than with the products from the list that he was ordered to bring.

“Look, girls, what kind of booze we will have at the table today,” he began to take out bottles of liquor from two bags and brag to the women.

- Here you are, our traditional malamatina, pink and white. And, of course, Mavrodafni, - the father-in-law put two bottles of excellent wine on the table in the living room, - on the occasion of the return of our son Karanik brut, pink champagne.

Riko hovered at his master's feet and barked almost non-stop, praising him for his generosity of soul.

Soon the long-awaited hour came, and at the sound of an approaching car, Rico jumped up as if stung and ran out into the yard with a joyful bark.

The domestics followed the white lapdog to meet another member of the family who arrived in a car. A tall, slender sailor, with two bouquets of flowers in his hands, hurried to the threshold of the house.

The right to hug her son first in such cases always went to the mother, then to the father, and finally to Thea. Now she felt like she was holding him tighter than usual.

What could be better for a woman feeling is in the arms of a strong and desirable man. Thea caught herself thinking that one of the best feelings in life is when you hug the person you love and he hugs you.

- Hello, dear, - Ion kissed her, looking into her eyes and showering her face with a second bouquet of flowers. He spoke in a low voice. - Bored?

"Very," she put her face to his chest for a moment.

- Woof, woof, woof, - Rico was jealous, demanding attention to himself.

"Yes, my dear, come to me, and I will caress you," he consoled the dog jumping into his arms.

"What beautiful roses," Thea said enthusiastically, inhaling the aroma of a bouquet of black and red roses.

- Finally, our son is with us again, - the father said with joy, - dragging all the family around the dining table set in the living room.

The home feast did not last very long, after which the father-in-law suggested a family trip on a yacht.

- Oh, no, father, I beg you, just not the sea again, because I just ran away from him and I want to be at home these few days without him, on land, in the family circle, next to you.

"He's right, Zeus, the boy has just come from the sea and is probably very tired," his mother supported, "we'd better go for a ride on a yacht, and leave the young at home, alone."

"Woof, woof," Rico reminded himself.

"And you can come with us too, if you like."

"Woof, woof," Rico barked approvingly.

After a short separation from his family, Jonah felt very tired towards the end of the feast and, having excused himself, retired to the matrimonial room on the second floor.

The parents left the house with the dog, and Thea hurried to her husband's room. After some preparations, she lay behind her husband, who had fallen asleep, clasping his shoulder with her left arm and putting her cheek to his back.

- How easily, imperceptibly and quickly a person turns from a monogamous into a polygamous, - she marveled at her thoughts and feelings.

She struggled for a long time with her feelings and the question of who she really loved, really - Jonah, her caring husband, who did so much for her in a foreign land and continues to spend a lot of various resources on her, including to support her life and health, as well as the well-being of her and her family at home, or Alexander, with whom she was connected by a short time spent with him at home, hugs and kisses with whom did not overshadow or erase, nor time. And more and more painfully she felt that she loved both, but each in her own way.

“Hooker,” Thea chuckled to herself, “a woman’s true love can only be for one man, and everything else is just variations,” an inner voice whispered to her.

But what is what, and who is who, only life itself and the situations that it loses with each person can judge this, because it is much smarter and more insidious than each of us. And sometimes very often he throws us such different and action-packed situations that even the most talented directors will not come up with.

- Undoubtedly, being determines the consciousness of a person, - she plunged more and more into her thoughts. - But it is surprising not only that each person in a different situation acts differently, but also that the same person in the same situations, but at different times, can act differently.

Now she was lying next to her second beloved and loving husband, and only he completely owned her feelings, but in his absence she completely and completely gave herself, with the help of the Internet, remotely, to her second beloved and loving man, Alexander, whom she called her land and water.

Her thoughts and sensations warmed up her body and soul more and more, it seemed to her that she could give herself right now to a third, unfamiliar man, her feelings reached such a great peak.

- Slut, - a negative thought flashed through her again, she turned her back to the back of her husband lying next to her and began to sink like an anchor in a dream synchronous with him.

XX

A close friend of Thea, Julia, was living a far from simple period of life now.

The next crossroads in life, which she had to pass unmistakably at the moment, both for herself and for the family remaining in her homeland, required from her a considerable expenditure of both willpower and feelings.

The internal struggle with herself with varying success, as if on a swing, threw her in one direction or the other.

Her feelings for her husband, who remained at home and made almost no efforts to improve the financial and economic situation of his family, constantly cooled, on the contrary, constantly asking Julia to stay in a foreign land as long as possible in order to at least partially pay off bank loans. By chance, she fell into the arms of a strong and passionate man, capable of giving her absolutely everything.

Strong male arms, warm and passionate hugs and kisses, ensuring complete economic independence and full sex, which she had long missed over the past few years of living in a distant overseas country.

During the day, she resisted in every possible way her sinful desires, which more and more often took possession of her at night, when she found herself alone with herself.

She also very clearly realized that sooner or later all battles between rational and sensual forces end in the victory of the latter.

Right now, during the departure of the eldest son of the hostess, she had to choose a further plan for the development of events: either give up everything and look for work elsewhere, or accept the role of a mistress, leave everything as it is.

She walked with slow steps, trying to determine for herself a way out of the situation. Her mind was repelled by everything that her soul and her feelings were drawn to.

She was afraid to admit to herself that she herself managed not to know at what particular moment in time to fall in love for the first time in her life with a man who, by age, was suitable for her fathers.

And in his absence, she always reached out to him, into his arms, the arms of a strong, wealthy, handsome and fearless man, and in his presence, with panic fear, she moved away from him in every possible way.

- Lord, how easy it is to cross the threshold of your piety, - Julia was surprised with horror, walking at a leisurely pace along one of the central avenues of the overseas capital.

The time, begged from the hostess to go to the pharmacy and buy the necessary medicines against the stomach ulcer that had developed in her from the influence of the spices of the local national cuisine and constant nervous experiences and upheavals, inexorably ran forward.

The ringing of church bells reminded her of the momentary readiness to come to her aid in resolving difficult life situations.

She struggled with thoughts about whether she should go to her only close friend Thea and tell her about all her secret thoughts and desires, but this ill-fated gold bracelet of Constantine, accidentally dropped by him that late evening, stuck like a fish bone in throat. Knowing herself, she was afraid that in a fit of revelation, she might confess to her friend that she was hiding his wife's gift. Confess to a theft that she didn't actually commit.

"Learn to never tell anyone anything, and then everything will always be fine with you," she constantly recalled one of the many tips so generously given by the Internet.

And then there was also advice that suggested that she always choose the most difficult path in life, because it was not easy to meet competitors on it.

- How difficult it is for a person to be alone in life, - she continued her reflections, - but it is even more difficult when feelings and thoughts go through life separately.

And how true the expression often sounds and manifests itself in its full and righteous essence, that a person rather falls in love not with a person, but with love itself, a place in which, over time, different people can even take.

- Yes, but in similar cases, is it not appropriate to distinguish along with love and friendship too? Julie's inner voice challenged her. - Nonsense, all this is dog, what kind of friendship between a woman and a man, can we talk about?

Any, even the most sincere and boundless love between a man and a woman is covered with a mask of hidden, bodily attraction to each other.

- In the end, this is an immutable law of nature, in which all bodies repel each other, and in wildlife, on the contrary, they attract. But due to the tragic incompatibility of human desires, a person often chooses tears instead of a smile, why is this so? Julia wondered.

Hello, Miss Doris, how are you? - Julia could not resist the possibility of a short visit to her friend, - Is Thea at home or at work?

"At home, daughter, come in, only now she can accept you or not, I don't know," the mother-in-law of her friend confirmed, almost completely killing Julia's desire and determination to confess to her friend.

- Why? What happened? Julia asked in dismay.

Rico, the favorite of Julia's friend, ran out to meet the unexpected guest barking.

- She is not well, as always, after the next course of chemotherapy, - the hostess explained, - but you come in, sit down, and I will inform her about your arrival.

ode.

"Maybe you shouldn't bother her then?" I'll visit her some other time," Julia suggested.

- Wait, daughter, now I'll find out from her.

- Who's there, mom? - I heard the voice of Jonah from the second floor. - And ... it's you Julia, - he drawled affably, - thanks for stopping by, I'll ask Thea now about the possibility of visiting her.

Going downstairs, after visiting Thea's room, Jonah embraced his wife's friend who had come to visit, whispering in her ear in a barely audible voice:

- Go to her, she is waiting for you.

Another hug, thought Julia, God, it's good and bad that they exist.

- How is she, there?

- Go to her and see for yourself.

Entering her friend's room with a leisurely step, she stood dumbfounded at the door for some time.

Thea lay in a thin white nightgown, her eyes fixed on the ceiling.

Close friends looked into each other's eyes for a while. Thea's gaze at Julia, who came up to her bed, was stronger and quickly diverted her friend's gaze to the side.

Exhausted, Thea, not without difficulty inhaling and exhaling air, looked doomedly at Julia, who, with watery eyes, sympathetically looked, in turn, at her bedridden friend suffering from an illness.

Why are you crying, friend? Thea whispered in a barely audible voice, "Have you heard anything new about my health?"

Julia threw herself into her friend's arms and sobbed.

"Don't be afraid, I won't die so fast," whispered Thea.

- I think I'm dying, - she wanted to admit, at first, but now she claimed the exact opposite.

Julia looked into Thea's eyes, and Thea stroked her friend's head with her left hand.

It seemed that they managed to talk about absolutely everything, silently, with their eyes, as the soul with the soul of a person can speak to each other.

Julia did not remember how she reached the house of her mistress, who, in turn, managed to share the news of her family members, which she managed to learn from her absence, as well as several homemade recipes for treating peptic ulcers.

In the evening, she managed to Skype with her family - a sixteen-year-old daughter and a twelve-year-old son, left under the care of her husband and aunt.

The husband, ostensibly in the daily search for a worthwhile job, did not miss the opportunity to spend time with his friends and lived his life, gradually, as Julia felt, cooling down on her and shifting the economic hardships onto his wife.

She felt his chill, the falsity of his vows of love.

- You probably already have someone, right, Tengiz? she once asked him

- What are you, Julia, who else can I love so much besides you? he swore back to her.

- Yes? And half-naked Salome, walking around in our house?

- I told you that she happened to be with us quite by accident.

- Half naked?

- Julia, well, you do understand that they don't take a shower in clothes. My friends and I were on a two day hike and she asked us to take a shower as they had an accident at home and no water. Well, what was I to do?

- And she, of course, had to walk naked around our house after that?

- Well, why naked, she was covered with a sheet.

- This is when I saw her, and then?

- And what then, then there was nothing, I swear to you, she got dressed and went home, and I went to the children, you can ask Aunt Nora.

- So I believed you, - cut off the connection Julia.

She perfectly understood that love is a feeling that manifests itself stronger in the presence of a person nearby.

She also remembered their feelings for each other at the very beginning of their life together.

Why does love fade so quickly? she lamented, not finding an answer to her question.

In the news, she looked at rallies and demonstrations in her homeland and in the country where she was now staying. The protesters opposed the construction of a new hydroelectric power station in a seismically hazardous area, which in the

event of an accident could cause the sinking of several settlements located in the lower reaches of the river.

According to activists, the construction of the power plant, which was won by one of the well-known foreign companies in the neighboring country, was necessary only for the purpose of obtaining bitcoins and other cryptocurrencies for the oligarchs, at the cost of risking the lives of thousands of people.

“You should not be especially surprised and indignant at all these environmental disasters, daughter,” the hostess of the house, Julia, tried to console Julia, empathetically watching the news broadcast on TV with her, “ubiquitous environmental disasters have always been satellites of mankind, not to mention the fact that even in Holy Scripture says that we should not be embarrassed by this, for in recent times their number will increase significantly. The life of mankind is inexorably heading towards a catastrophe, and only the chosen ones will be saved. We, mere mortals, can only postpone the coming of the time of perdition by prayers.

“And how we would like to live in ours, even if it is a restless and unjust world, in health and love,” Julia dropped with regret.

We used to live in paradise. But we lost this paradise due to disobedience and sins, and as a result, we were expelled from it, - Lidia Ivanovna concluded. - Only the paradise of Adam and Eve would

I that one and only real paradise in which absolutely everything was prepared for a happy life for a person, but we, people, because of disobedience and, even worse, impenitence, lost it. Paradise Lost is the paradise of Adam and Eve!

“And not only that,” Julia thought to herself. - Lost paradise for me and my husband turned out to be the love that cracked at the seams and which we could not save with him. And his resuscitation is now no longer possible, unlike the paradise of Adam and Eve, into which, not without difficulty, but still every person living on earth can get only by his righteous life.

- In Paradise Lost, probably, everyone was infinitely at ease, good and warm, - Julia almost whined.

“But nothing is impossible, a righteous life on earth, each person can return it for himself, that is, after death, get into it,” Lidia Ivanovna seemed to repeat Julia’s thoughts. - Theologians describe paradise as a place of such boundless love, in which even the mother of a murdered son can embrace his murderer.

- We are all expelled from Paradise, - Julia dropped sadly, - and in order to return to it, life on earth must be in labor, prayers and repentance, and then everyone will be able to change their fate.

- Yes, something like this, daughter, we need to try to live our earthly life with dignity and righteousness, - but a person is not capable of this either, because the creator himself tells us that we cannot even take a step without him, and therefore, in order to be together with him and go through your life, you need to visit his

house at least once a week, pray, and touch his sacraments. A reminder of this is the ringing of church bells.

“The ringing that I heard today, but I didn’t give in to call it,” Julia thought to herself with regret.

PART FOUR

XXI

Louis the sixteenth, Louis the Sun, once again lost the battle to a young couple who fought, as it seemed, not for life, but for death and to the last.

The creaking of the sleeping bed monotonously increased with cries of "come on, don't stop, harder"...until her hind legs flew off like a cannonball blast and both naked fighting bodies were thrown flat on the floor.

There was a feminine laugh.

- What's so funny, I don't understand? - a man's voice was surprised.

Women's laughter did not stop until the man got up reluctantly from the floor and moved to the bathroom.

- Abnormal - thought the man.

Soon, a fairy of dazzling whiteness appeared before him, wrapped in a white transparent sheet, continuing to wipe her wet body with light movements of her hands.

- You like me like this, - opening the sheet, asked a female voice.

- You are beautiful, no doubt, - agreed the man, who had already managed to sit down on the nearest armchair, - but if not offended and honestly, I have seen more beautiful bodies. You are too skinny.

- You mean Carol? a female voice asked.

- What nonsense, what does it have to do with it, Agneta, that there is no one else in the world besides her? And then she's married.

- Just think, well, what's wrong with that, - Agnetha was amazed, - I was also once married.

- I'm not greedy for married women, I have my own principles in this regard.

- Yes? And I noticed how she shoots at you with her eyes and probably does not mind having fun with you, - Agneta smiled slyly.

- Please stop talking nonsense, Agnetha.

- It's a pity, but I could even persuade her to have a threesome, what do you say, Vano? Agnetha continued to giggle.

- Stop it, please, this is still not enough for me.

- It's a pity, Carol and I are old friends, and if between us, in secret, we already had such a joint affair with her, with one Dutchman, but you are much better than him.

- And what, well?

- It's a woman's secret.

- We'd better think about how to repair your bed.

- I think that you will cope with this successfully.

Agnetha threw off the wet sheet and went naked to the closet to pick up her duty wardrobe.

Vano glanced at her.

- A twig, - he thought involuntarily, - a reed twig.

- You guessed it, that's what they call me, - Agneta seemed to read his thoughts. - But in any case, you are already mine, and I will not give you to anyone, except that I can borrow for a while and then a very close friend.

- Oh, my God, I got so stuck, - thought Vano, also hastily dressing in his clothes.

Soon they were already lying on the bed repaired by Vano. Vano smoked his cigarette and, looking at the ceiling, boasted to Agneta, blowing out a succession of white rings, tobacco smoke.

Do you want to try weed? Agnes suggested.

- No, thanks, I'm content with my cigarette.

- It's a pity, but I'll probably smoke a little, - Agneta took a deep puff of her homemade cigarette.

She lay on her back next to Vano, her head resting on his outstretched left arm.

- Did you enjoy being with me? she asked.

"Not really," Vano gave her a serious look.

- Why, because of the bed?

- Almost, - Vano agreed.

Agneta giggled again in response.

- I need to decide something with the work, Agneta, - Vano explained in a serious voice.

- I know a Russian-speaking company, it works in our port, I have my own people there, if I manage to get you a job there, then after some time you can apply to the immigration service. - Agneta explained, - to obtain a residence permit, and then, on the basis of an employment contract, they can allow you to live and work in our country, do you understand?

- I understand, - Vano agreed.

- But most often it does not work, a much better option is a marriage - real or fictitious.

- Again you tend to there same?

- Why don't you like me, huh? - Agneta leaned on him with half of her body.

- You have very beautiful lips and eyes, Vano, did anyone tell you about this?

- Certainly,

- Who?

- You.

Agneta pressed her lips to his.

- Agneta, I'm married, I have a family, - Vano tried to explain, freeing himself from her kiss.

- Your family is there, in your homeland, and there will be a second one here, I will be your second wife here.

- Oh ... no, for God's sake, one is enough for me, I'm not a fan of polygamy.

"And you just have no other choice, honey," she threw back at him with a smile, getting out of bed and heading for the drinks bar.

- I want something to drink, - she suddenly threw, - will you keep me company?

- What else can we do with you?

- I don't know, - Vano answered thoughtfully, - everything is at your disposal.

- Yeah, it would have been like that for a long time, that's how I like you more,

- Agneta flirted. - If you want, we will arrange a short tour of our city with you, I will show it the way you have not seen it yet.

- With pleasure, - Vano agreed.

- Has anyone told you that our city is over seven hundred years old and is located on many islands?

- Yes, I heard that our city is two and a half times older.

Tell me more about him later, okay?

"No problem," Vano agreed.

"Maybe someday I'll be lucky enough to visit you.

- Absolutely, as soon as this epidemic corona the virus will end.

- Will you introduce your wife too?

- Absolutely, - Vano agreed aloud, and then he thought to himself with horror.

- I just don't have enough scandals with Eka.

- No, that's what's true is true, your subway is fabulous, - agreed Vano - trying to change the topic of conversation.

- Everything is beautiful with us, except for biting prices and taxes, but we don't like to talk about it.

- Lagom, - Vano confirmed, - I heard about it.

Agnetha smiled back at him in agreement as she continued her preparations for breakfast.

Suddenly there was a call on Agneta's mobile.

- Yes, I have it and now it's mine, - Agnetha answered smiling into her mobile phone. - I stole it from you, however, you can join us if you want, we are planning a trip to the sights of our city today. Please, now, - Agnetha handed her cell phone to Vano.

- Hello, dear, how are you? – asked Carol, - my girlfriend does not get you very much?

- No, no, everything is fine, but if the issue with work is resolved, I will be very grateful.

"It wasn't easy, but we'll figure something out," Carol promised.

- Yes, here Agneta also promises to help me with this.

- Give, - Agnetha took away her mobile phone and hurried to brag to her friend, - Carol, I suggest that he arrange a fictitious marriage with me to obtain a residence permit, so it will be easier to resolve the issue with work.

- Also an idea, - Carol agreed, - but what is he?

- And he resists, says that polygamy is not accepted in their homeland.

"Hmm, in his homeland, while he is here, his homeland is also here," her friend seemed to agree with her.

- So I also tell him about this, - Agnetha giggled in response.

- Wait, girlfriend, you're telling me something fun about it, - Carol doubted, - don't tell me, did it already happen between you?

- And what not?

- No, for God's sake, I just want to know if it's true?

- And this is already in person, - Agnetha giggled.

- Hmm, you, I see how a meteor, girlfriend, you don't waste time in vain.

"That's right," agreed Agnetha.

- Okay, I went, otherwise my husband is already calling.

"Go, go to him and don't deprive him of your attention," Agnetha encouraged her. I've settled my affairs with Carol, as you can see, and she doesn't mind.

- Oh, I would like your worries, girls, - Vano sighed.

When Vano was leaving Agneta's house, his mother called him on his mobile, and a little later - Beno, saying that he was detained at the police station and, if he could help in any way, asked him for help.

- What happened, Vano, you don't have complexion? asked Agnetha.

- My friend was detained by the police, - Vano explained.

- Where? For what?

- He says that in the city there is a terminal, there is a police station nearby.

- And now what?

- I don't even know what to do, - Vano thought, - wait. He quickly dialed a number on his mobile.

"Father," he heard soon from his lips, "Beno called me just now, said that he was detained by the police.

- Again this Beno, how many times have I asked you not to mess with these guys anymore, because of them you lost your job, and now their problems are on their heads.

- Well, father, after all, a man asks, he has no one closer to us, we need to help out a fellow countryman.

- And what can I do, we ourselves are here like homeless homeless people and have enough problems of our own, and now there is also he on our head.

- Please call our friends Lazio, Bobby and Bill, maybe they can help? Agneta, how much do you have a taxi here, can you tell me exactly?

- Taxis are expensive, Vano, about three hundred crowns or thirty euros for every ten kilometers. And why do we need a taxi, you can get there quickly by metro, - Agnetha explained.

- Are you with me?

- Well, of course, but how can I leave you alone, at such a moment.

Soon, the young couple hurried to the nearest metro station, fortunately, special long-term cards came in handy.

At the police station, all employees were wearing masks and visitors were also required to wear them, as in any institution in the city and supermarkets.

Lazio, Bobby and Vano's father arrived before the young couple.

- Well, what is there? Vano hurried to ask his father.

- Everything is complicated, Beno was detained for stealing bicycles.

- Horrible! - Vano was amazed, although a thought flashed through his soul, - what else could he do, left without a job, how to support himself in this expensive northern European city.

- Well, now Lazio and Bobby are petitioning for the case to be reclassified and released on bail, if possible, otherwise if the case goes to court, then the case is disastrous, - Father Vano explained.

"God bless them," Vano sighed.

- Yes, they do, son, but then we will have to cover this deposit, do you know about it or not? David explained.

"Somehow, father, God will help, we'll find a job, and I, and he, and over time we'll cover everything, the main thing is to get him out of there now," Vano almost prayed, who at one time had experience of being detained by the police in his homeland for active participation in a protest action against the detention of political prisoners and illegal actions of some police officers.

- They seem to have the same as ours, a little something like "seven troubles one answer", the stigma was detained for disobedience and disobedience by the "police", and Any business can be done, - Vano Agneta explained.

- It's not quite like that with us, Vano, no one detains anyone without a special and good reason, - Agneta explained.

It took almost half a day to release Beno from the hands of law enforcement officers on bail.

Beno, bowing his head in shame, apologized to all his rescuers and vowed to pay off the debt on bail in the near future.

- Well, what are we going to do now? - asked Agneta, left alone with Vano.

- Maybe we can refresh ourselves a little in an inexpensive cafe and at least partially implement our plan for today, okay? Vano asked.

- He's coming, - Agneta agreed, dragging him towards a nearby establishment.

Shortly after leaving the cafe, Agneta's mobile phone rang. Her father called, who said that her mother was taken by an ambulance to the hospital with a high temperature, a suspected coronavirus.

"So I talked to her yesterday, and she assured me that everything was all right with her," Agneta was amazed.

- Yes, everything was fine yesterday, but in the morning the condition worsened.

- Where did they take her?
- In the central city clinic, fortunately, there was a place there.
- Okay, I'll go to her right away.
- What's the point, epidemiologists won't let you in anyway.
- All the same, I'll visit her, how are you?
- I seem to be fine, but they told me to self-isolate for two weeks.
- Lord, what a horror all around, - Agneta shed tears, - well, dad, you hold on.

And I'll go to the hospital and then I'll call you again.

"Just be careful, daughter," the father asked.

- Do not worry, it will be good. I'm sorry, Vano, I need to go to the hospital urgently, but about my promise to show you the sights, let's wait a bit, okay?

- Of course, what are we talking about, Agnetha, - Vano agreed.

- See you, bye.

- Bye, but do you want to go there alone?

I don't want to put you at risk.

- No, it won't work, I'm with you, you were with me in difficult moments for my friend, now I'm with you.

Agneta, teary-eyed, hugged Vano: Thank you, dear.

Soon, the young people were at the gates of the central clinic, where they spent time until late in the evening and would have been on duty until the morning, if not for the curfew recently introduced by the city hall.

- We don't have such measures yet, Agnetha, - Vano explained.

- I'm afraid it will be the same with you, and throughout the world. Vanga once said that everyone would get sick, it's another matter that not everyone can cope with this infection. And she also said that the coronavirus will not be exterminated until everyone has been ill with it.

Vano had more than forty minutes to get to his parents' house before the curfew began.

- Don't leave me alone tonight, - asked Agnetha.

Vano gazed into her eyes, sinking into their depths, hesitated a little, knowing about the experiences of his mother when he did not spend the night with his parents.

Two beloved women were now fighting inside him for the right to own him, both were pulling the rope of his soul to their side.

- I understand you, dear, and I won't call you your mother's son, don't be afraid, go to her, yesterday you were mine, today it's her turn - Agneta, bowing her head, went to her house.

But she did not even notice how Vano went into the house with her, but saw him already lying on the bed repaired in the morning.

Agnetha gladly threw off her dressing gown and dived into his arms.

- And what about mom, Vano? she asked anxiously.

- She allowed me to stay with you today too.

Her head rested peacefully on his athletic chest, which was lightly stroked by her gentle snow-white hand - you have a wonderful mother, Vano.

- I know, - Vano agreed.

- You know, for some reason I thought that only our people are warm and kind, - Agneta admitted, - it turns out, I was wrong.

- I was not mistaken, - Vano stroked her face, as if straightening her hair.

- You are warm, and we are hot, - Vano smiled in response.

- I've been waiting for you for so long, you can't even imagine, - Agnetha confessed to him.

- Hello, you don't know me at all, - objected Vano, - how long, since we met?

- You, men, do not understand this, but a woman always recognizes her man.

- Like this? Vano asked.

"In the eyes," explained Agnetha.

- As it is in the eyes, come on, teach me.

- And it's very simple, - Agnetha cheered up, - look, if you want, I'll show you an owl, do you want?

- Interesting, but maybe for a start I will turn off the night light so that it is not scary?

- I love you fearless.

- Yes, that's right, that's who I am, and that's what ruined me in your eyes.

- Well, look then, - Agneta cheered up even more, - and close your eyes, do not open them until I tell you about it.

Vano guessed about her idea only when her tender nose clung to the tip of his nose, but still decided to play this game with her to the end.

Now count to three and only then quickly open your eyes.

- One, two, three ... oh, my God, what a horror, why this game Agneta.

- To make you a little afraid of me.

- Why?

- Because I'm a wild cat according to the horoscope and sometimes I bite.

- I wonder how?

Agnetha opened her little mouth and bit him. Vano turned her over on her back and kissed her.

and only now felt how his love for his wife was divided in two. He used to be with more than one woman and cheated on his wife more than once, but only physically, but now? Now everything was different.

"What a bastard you are, Ivan," a thought flashed through his mind, and he immediately recoiled from it in thought.

- What happened, Vano, what's wrong?

- Everything is fine, I just seem to be tired today, - he tried to remain unnoticed.

She again laid her tender head on his bare chest and with the index finger of her right hand began to draw banal circles on her chest, and then some mysterious hieroglyphs.

“How amazingly the nature of earthly human love is arranged, after all,” he caught himself in his thoughts, why one love is diluted with another, second, third, why can’t you love everyone equally? And immediately he remembered his favorite cartoon about an amorous little crow, who loved absolutely all the animals living in the forest with equal force, for which subsequently, all the animals turned against her and expelled her from their forest. In the end, only the bear came to his senses, annoyed without her love and noticing that, well, let her love each of them.

- There is so much wisdom in cartoons and children's fairy tales, - Vano admitted.

- Hey, Vano, where are you, wake up, - Agneta waved the palm of her hand in front of his eyes. Who are you with now and where?

- I'm sorry, I've been thinking.

- Or daydreaming? And about what, come on, spit it out.

- About the whims of fate, - Vano smiled.

- Yes, indeed, fate has many quirks - there's nothing to say, - Agneta agreed with him. - Why go far, for example, if we take even today, what and how we planned, and what we got in the end.

- Probably, it is both insulting and encouraging at the same time that life does not belong to people? And little that depends on them.

- You want to say that the fact that we are now lying with you with each other does not depend on us? asked Agnetha.

“Imagine this, too,” Vano concluded affirmatively.

- With this I absolutely agree with you.

The young couple philosophized for a long time about life, about love, the charms and whims of fate, until one of the questions remained unanswered.

- Wolf cub, what do you think, doesn't love have its own mysterious mysterious language, thanks to which even those who speak different languages, loving people can understand each other without words?

Agneta sweetly ran away from Vano into a dream, and he even more strongly felt the weightlessness of her small, delicate head and hand with the weight of a dandelion.

An indescribable gentle energy jet poured out of her body, and the feeling of this bliss gave him such a surge of energy that he did not feel even during the longest workouts.

The magnitude of the feelings he experienced surpassed even the feeling of physical closeness last night.

In those moments, he clearly understood that not only reason and thoughts, but also much stronger feelings can be excellent teachers of life for a person.

Vano also made sure why the thought spoken out loud is a lie. Because with feelings and silently you can convey much more information to another person than with reason and speech. Gradually, he, along with his newfound love, plunged into the jungle of the radiant kingdom.

XXII

The sun, which had grown stronger by the middle of summer, did not spare the earth even on a hill where suburban household plots were located. Therefore, their inhabitants often had to adapt to his whims, especially since nature itself did not lag behind this occupation.

A pair of hoes, deftly dodging, slowly moved along neatly laid out earthen strips with green plantings, successfully freeing them from various types of weeds and dried top layers of earthen growths.

"Oh, what an excellent harvest this has turned out to be, father, just look," a male voice rejoiced.

"Yes, indeed, son," came the answer from the father, who paused work and leaned on the end of the wooden handle of the hoe.

- And what a flavor and what big Gulliver fruits, - the voice admired, inhaling the smell of the red fruit.

- You match, - rejoiced in the answer father.

- Son, they've been calling you on your mobile for a long time, can't you hear something? - a woman's voice hurried to meet him with a mobile phone in his hand.

- Who is it, I wonder, I needed in the morning? the owner of the phone asked.

- Lela, probably, son, but who else, - tried to guess the father.

- Well, what do you want? the man said on the phone.

- Are you completely detached from real life Bezhan, okay, if you forgot about your family, but did you let everything go by itself, and work connections?

- Stop nag me, what do you want?

- What, what, they call you all evening yesterday from the bank, then from the tax office. Ask for semi-annual reports?

Nothing will happen to them if they wait a couple of days.

- So you at least answer them so that they don't call me here.

- Okay, calm down, we'll figure it out.

When you get home, the kids will miss you.

- If you knew what kind of tomato crop we are harvesting here, you would not call me back home.

- Also for me, Diocletian was found, because he had cabbage, and you had tomatoes. Do you even feel the difference between them?

Bejan thought for a moment, as if his wife had given him a difficult task. But, deftly orienting himself, he retorted.

- And what can I do if you are lazy, do not want to live here with us and work on the land.

We were not raised in our family for this kind of life.

- Well, in vain. Although you can learn everything if you wish and get used to everything, isn't it, father?

The father nodded his head affirmatively. In response, a loud pecking of turkeys came from the far side of the land.

- What a horror - whispered a female voice over the phone.
- You only like to eat grapes, right? - paraphrased a phrase from the famous movie Bezhan.

- And here the grapes, Bezhan. Our son has problems again with his passion, he returns home late and eats almost nothing, and your daughter also needs a father, by the way.

- Oh, oh, - Bezhan drawled, - okay, okay, I'll show up at home tonight, but without your concerts, ok? - he insured in advance.

"Mother, bring some bowl," asked an elderly, muscular man who managed to get an enviable sun tan on the site.

- Do not scold them, son, in vain, and do not condemn, these are now all the city, not only women. If a person is not accustomed to work on the ground, then it is difficult to incline him to such work. And then every person in this life must do his own thing.

- Oh, father, if you knew how hard it is for me with them. We are completely different people, and it turns out like in that fable, remember, about the swan, cancer and pike.

An elderly, thin woman hurried to get a bowl of red ripe tomatoes, picked and neatly stacked in heaps on various plots of land cultivated by her son and husband's hoes.

In the morning, Bezhan had to help his old parents in order to get to the city before the lunch break and settle all the planned business at work.

At this time of the year, there was nothing better for Bezhan than living in a suburban area, where he breathed cleaner and calmer, and where he managed to relax and take his soul away from the hectic and stressful city life.

And then a sense of duty and a desire to help his parents, who had taken care of him and his family all his life, worked. And his city family could easily do without him. And he always tried to be where he felt more needed.

The distance between a city family and a country one, he covered in his car in less than an hour. He was supplied with gas coupons by the company in which he worked.

- Dali, coffee, - Bezhan commanded, hurriedly entering his office after arriving from his suburban area.

"Now," said the secretary.

- Did anyone ask me?

Yes, boss.

- Heraclius? What did you answer him?

- She said that you are absent on matters of materials.

- Well done, then it will be necessary to go up to him later.

Did the lifter come?

- Yes.

- And what did he say, why the elevator of the president of the company was blocked.

- In my opinion, some parts needed lubrication.

- In the new elevator? Hm, wow.

- Besides, employees have not yet learned how to use it.

- Like this?

- Yes, they touch the open doors, after which the maintenance lamp turns on, and the elevator is blocked.

- Me too, nerd. Call me Lasha and Merab.

- Now.

- Do not know

Uh, they brought first aid glove boxes from the base.

Yes, they are yellow.

- What is the meaning of color, Dali? The administrator chuckled.

“Yes, I’m just like that,” Dali agreed.

Turning on two monitors next to each other, the administrator began to look through the materials on the office and began, as always, by reading the reports of the night watchmen.

- Bezhan, you have already arrived, - the commanding voice of the deputy president of the company was heard.

Yes, Heraclius.

- Come to me when you can.

- Anything urgent?

- No, just some documents need to be brought to mind.

In the office of his friend, the boss, the administrator met accounting documents spread out on the table.

- Need my help?

“The numbers in the balance simply do not converge in one place here,” the voice of the chief was heard in response.

- Irakli, we have already discussed this issue and have come to a consensus.

- Yes, but now this information has somehow reached the most important person, he calls me from abroad and is interested in this issue.

- Oh, again, these women muddy the waters. After all, this is my money, Irakli, I brought it to the company and who cares what to do with my salary?

- Rumors circulate around the company, which reached the main one, they say why he has so many, and we have ...

- If someone does not like it, good riddance. Here is Vano, his salary was not enough for him, he took it and drove off beyond the cordon, and now he receives much more there than I do here.

“Wait a minute, don’t boil over, I didn’t invite you to my place for that, we’ll solve this and other minor issues somehow.

- Irakli, no problem, as I came to you, I can leave, so they invite me to the sports federation, only in this case I will take all my money and contracts with me. Eh, it was good at the previous job in the Sports Federation. This is where heaven really was for me. If not for the complaints and denunciations of some. Fools, and spoiled the case for themselves, and for me.

- Yes, you wait, I tell you, do not boil, calm down. I understand you perfectly. But you must understand me too. Of course, it's good where we're not, but...

- Almost everyone here is asking me to increase my salary, with this pandemic, prices, you know how they jumped. Look, yesterday even our night watchmen asked me for an increase, and then they sent the same request in writing.

- And what else do they need, they sit warm in the winter, and in the summer with air conditioning, with the Internet, with tea, coffee and with the opportunity to sleep at night.

- I don't know, Heraclius.

If you don't like it, let them go. We will find others younger and more energetic. There is nothing to keep these old boobies at home. Yes, even on a medical policy, they actually eat up almost the second salary, plus bonuses twice a year, and plus paid vacation as the thirteenth salary. Truly insatiable people.

- Yes, Alexander somehow casually complained to me that if all the research institutes, including him, had not been closed, then today he would live in abundance.

- This doctor of sciences, the watchman, is already sitting here for me, - the current head of the company walked down his throat, - but what, we are also to blame for this?

- And Mikhail, for example, rents an apartment and all his salary goes to rent and utilities.

- So let him go to his village, plow there and live in abundance. You are worse than anyone, Bezhan, you work on the ground, help your family. By the way, how are your parents?

- They're okay. That's just the new dog is mischievous and impudent very much.

- Who, Molly?

- Yes, this black yard panther.

- What with her?

- Oh, I didn't want to upset you, Irakli, but remember, you gave me three decorative chickens.

- Well.

- Strangled the bastard.

- All three?

- No, two hens, and the rooster, although small, could stand up for itself.

- So why didn't he protect his chickens?

- A neighbor who watched their duel said that he defended his women to the last, but could he resist a dog?

- Okay, don't be upset, we'll find new girls for your cock, you just teach your savage a lesson so that you don't dare to do this next time.

- He beat her, almost to death, but what's the point, does it help, but it's a pity to kick her out for good, and her daughter won't allow it.

- And what about Rex and Eve?

- Here they will never allow themselves such a thing in their thoughts.

- Such mongrels do not distinguish their own from strangers, and nothing can be done about it.

- Heraclius, listen, it's already well past noon, and I've been hungry since morning, I haven't eaten anything, I just keep on drinking coffee recently, come to my restaurant for lunch, and then we'll come back and continue all our business, right?

- All right, - the administrator's friend agreed after some thought.

- Then I'll go to my place, get ready and wait for you downstairs, by the car, only you quickly, otherwise my stomach will burst from hunger soon.

- When was it, Bezhan, that a person's stomach burst from hunger, - Irakli grinned, - he would rather burst from gluttony.

- When it was? I'll tell you this on the way in the car, - Bezhan promised his friend, hastily leaving his room.

Going down to his office, he found his secretary chained with her face to the window, not even turning around at his arrival, which surprised him a little. Cautiously approaching her, he took her by the shoulders and asked her in an undertone.

- Did something happen, Dali?

Startled slightly at the touch of his mighty hands, her eyes pointed to the side courtyard of the building.

From a secluded place towards an uninvited guest, a strange dog ran out a mother dog with her puppies. She defended her territory and her offspring by barking, and little puppies, who had just learned to move, imitating her, learned to bark from her, and did it very funny.

"You are just as funny and wonderful as me, my dear," Bezhan said warmly to his secretary and kissed her gently on the forehead.

- Thank you, - Dali thanked, a little embarrassed and blushing.

"I'll be away for a while and be back soon," he commanded her, "if they ask me, do you know how to answer?"

"Okay, batono Bezhan," Dali agreed, patiently waiting for the owner to leave the room. On that day, friends-bosses, who left together for a belated break, did not return to the company.

The beginning of autumn turned out to be quite warm.

Despite the fact that most flights in the country were suspended due to the outbreak of a new wave of the coronavirus pandemic, individual flights continued with precautionary measures.

Among the guests at the city airport, a woman of about forty, distinguished by her attractive appearance, with an inscription on a sign in English: Welcome Agneta, I am Eka, caught the eye.

She frantically awaited the arrival of an airplane from one of the European countries, did not find peace in any place, heading either to the airport information desk, or quickly climbing to the second floor along the wide stairs of the airport building, heading to the large display windows overlooking the runway stripes.

Finally, her long wait was rewarded, and she saw a giant airliner coming in to land.

She already forgot the last time she was at the airport and saw the planes live.

- Hello, Agneta, - Eka met the guest.

- Hello, Eka, - replied Agneta, who managed to escape from the captivity of her delegation for a minute.

A short conversation between the women was interrupted by the head of the delegation, who ordered his men to follow to the car they met.

- So you are such a beauty, Eka, my rival, - a thought flashed through Agneta's head.

- Here she is, our hope and savior, - Eka's thoughts attacked, - how is my Vano and his parents?

- Everything is fine, I asked you to send greetings and something else.

- We are unlikely to have time to talk now, I don't even know where you are going to stay and how long, so here's my business card with contacts, be sure to contact me?

- All right, all right, Eka, - Agneta agreed moving away from her.

- On Saturday, I invite you and your friends to the wedding of my daughter Sofiko.

- I don't know, Eka, how it will be possible, and whether we will stay until Saturday, we arrived only for a few days, we have a working trip, - Agnetha explained.

"Don't you really want to meet our Vano's daughter?"

The word "our" coming from the lips of Eka pleasantly pricked Agneta.

- Well, let's see how it goes, - Agnetha smiled in response, already being picked up by a wave of members of the delegation heading for the exit.

Several expensive black foreign cars soon drove away from the airport building and headed into the city along the renovated highway.

Eka barely had time to wipe away the surging tears that rolled in waves on her iridescent eyes.

"Misha, you better help your daughter solve her homework," a female voice asked from the kitchen.

- Maka, well, what an assistant I am to her, - Mikhail objected in response, - you might think that it's not she who studies with us at the Komarov Specialized Physics and Mathematics School, but me. You know perfectly well that her tasks are already far beyond my teeth.

- Well, all the same, Misha, try, at least there will be an occasion to talk with your daughter once again, otherwise she and her brother for a couple replaced their parents and grandmother with their favorite phones and computers a long time ago.

- You shouldn't have asked me to provide Internet and Wi-Fi at home. Indeed, the latter has turned into a wai-wai for our family.

- And how then would they be engaged in the school curriculum? Don't go to school for them, and don't study remotely either? What, you want to grow ignoramus out of them?

"That's right," Michael agreed. - But I can't help but notice, but how was it before, did they raise normal, erudite, intelligent people in families without schools?

- So after all, governesses and hired teachers came to their house.

- And who are you, aren't you a teacher?

- Well, then come here to the kitchen and cook dinner instead of me, and I'll go to work with the children.

- All right, all right, - Mikhail quickly agreed, unable to completely deal with the temptation of the aroma of the future home meal wafting up to him.

- Well, daughter, let's try together with you to cope with a difficult mathematical problem, since you alone cannot do it.

"No, dad, I just don't fully understand the conditions of this task," the daughter began to explain.

- Well, the only thing, perhaps, with which I can agree with you, Gvantsa, is that before solving any problem in life, including mathematical, you need to clearly and clearly understand its conditions and what kind of permission it requires.

Mikhail's mother, with the help of a stick, slowly moved from room to room and rejoiced at the employment of all members of her family.

The daughter-in-law busied herself in the kitchen with the preparation of dinner, and the son, along with his children, studied their studies at a round table in the living room.

Mikhail's son built individual drawings with the help of small cubes, collecting them according to general drawings on sheets, attached to a special board game.

- Wakho, they ask you to phone, - the grandmother reported to her grandson, continuing the conversation on the mobile, - our neighbor, she is interested in when you start school?

- Ba, tell her that I have no time now, I'm busy with a very important matter.

“Ah, pa, I finally understood, so that’s what was required of us in solving the problem,” the daughter exclaimed with joy and wrote the necessary and correct equation to solve a difficult mathematical problem.

- My smart girl, - Mikhail was delighted, kissing his daughter on the forehead, - here in you go, when you think carefully and well, you will be able to solve the most difficult problem in life, and not only mathematical.

- This is all with your help, pa, - Gvantsa continued to squeal with joy, - when you, adults, sit next to me when I do my homework, then my head works better.

- But you need to remember, daughter, that we will not be with you all the time and always, and the sooner you get used to independence, the better for you and for your brother.

- For example, I myself collect pictures from cubes, pa, - Vakho boasted, without taking his eyes off his needlework.

- Here is a good fellow, son, - Mikhail praised his son, - I want you to learn to help each other when there is a need.

Gvantsa shook her head in the affirmative, continuing to finish her difficult mathematical problem to the end.

“Pa, this is exactly what I love math so much for,” she boasted.

- Yes, my daughter, there is something to love about mathematics, believe me, - Mikhail agreed.

For example, we had a very good mathematician at school who constantly told us that we should love mathematics, and that she would definitely thank us for this later.

- This is already from the laws of physics, pa, about action and reaction, - explained Gvantsa.

- Rather, from the philosophical saying of the wise, - Vakhtang intervened, - what you sow, you will reap.

- My dears, how happy I am for you, children, you can't even imagine. You see, mother, how smart they are growing up with me, they all went to their father, - Mikhail boasted to his mother.

- Not in the father, but in the mother, - a woman's voice came from the kitchen.

- Ogogo, and Maka just pricked up her ears. Eyes and hands there in the kitchen, and ears here.

The elderly mother continued her walks from one room to another and did not stop smiling.

- And one more thing, what I personally liked most about mathematics, my daughter ...

- What? - without taking her head off the task, she asked.

- So it is that virtually any processes and phenomena in life can be described by the corresponding equations, even imagine that our communication with you too.

- Then, it turns out that the main thing in life is to be able to write the correct equations in order to get the right answers to all the phenomena and processes that happen in life.

- Quite right, my smart girl, exactly what you are doing now. So the main thing is to write the corresponding equation in mathematics, and then solve it, this is, as they say, a matter of technology.

- Hurrah, - Gvantsa exploded with joy, running to the kitchen to brag to her mother.

“And, in my opinion, the main thing in life is to be attentive, pa, and move your brain a little,” Vakhtang, the little son of Mikhail, intervened.

- This is, first of all, a son, - supported his father.

Returning from the kitchen, Gvantsa put her right leg under her, sat down again at the table and, sucking on the edge of her ballpoint pen, continued to solve her next equation.

- Yes, and one more thing I would like to tell you children.

The children's ears perked up instantly.

- God endowed each person with an individual talent, and each of us is talented in his own way. To one he gave one talent, to the second two, and so on to each as much as he can master, and at the end of his life he will ask them back from each.

But these talents, as every treasure should be, are buried in a person very deeply and reliably, and in order to find them, get to them and, accordingly, master them, you need to dig long and deep in the bowels of your consciousness and soul, and then, having found, having discovered and mastered them, it is necessary to use them correctly for the benefit of people and the whole society, which will bring glory and recognition to a person for many years and a sense of duty done to the creator. And money, a necessary attribute of our life, in this case, will come by itself. Ultimately, the realization that it was not in vain that he came to our world and that he has something to leave after his life.

- For example, I want to be a teacher of mathematics, - Gvantsa cried out with pleasure, - because I feel how mathematics sits inside me and how much I love it.

- And I want to be an aircraft designer when I grow up, - little Wakho intervened.

- Well, well done, my children, we believe in you with the whole family, support you and are sure that not only when you become adults, but even now you will justify all our hopes. The main thing is not to be lazy, superficial, but work and study hard, hard, all your life, and constantly dig the deep bowels of your consciousness and soul, discovering more and more new talents in yourself.

We were created by the creator in order to be creators ourselves, the process of creativity leads us to happiness. It is not for nothing that it is said that in order to build, you need to know, and in order to know, you need to learn.

But, to realize your potential, you need not only to learn to build, but also to create, to be creative in your favorite business.

On the Internet, you have probably met more than once with various proposals on how to make good money in this or that Internet project, but if a person does not have a heart and soul for this business, then this activity is useless. Therefore, from now on, look for your favorite thing, that is, your talents that will captivate you in the future for yourself.

- And I also dream of becoming a model, dad, and performing at beauty contests in beautiful and fashionable dresses, - Gvantsa exclaimed thoughtfully, - but what about mathematics, I don't know?

"Everything is very simple, daughter," Mikhail hurried to console her, "your brother has an exact and correct answer to this, doesn't he, Vakho? The father turned to his son.

- It's like in my experiment with two magnets and a metal ball, - Vakhtang hurried to explain with joy, - whichever magnet pulls, the ball will roll there.

"And you shut up and don't interfere in the conversations of the elders," Gvantsa replied with insult, "and I'm not a ball for you, a metal ball itself, and let's roll away from here until I give you a slap on the back of the head."

- Gvantsa, well, what kind of threats against your brother, he figuratively explained everything to you, - Mikhail hastened to moderate the ardor of his daughter.

"If you don't want to, don't, I won't teach you the mind anymore," Vakhtang retorted coolly, continuing, without lifting his head, assembling his mosaic.

- What else I wanted to add to what was said, children, and partially answer your question, daughter.

During life, we should try to fully use and realize all the talents given to us by the Creator.

- Who doesn't have them? Maybe it could be like that, - Gvantsa asked.

"God is merciful, daughter, and he loves each of us equally, therefore he does not deprive anyone of anything, including talents," the father repeated patiently.

- Mom, please tell your son not to compost the brains of children too much, - Maka, Mikhail's mother complained, - they are still very small to think in such philosophical categories.

"Let her talk, daughter," consoled her mother, "anyway, children will absorb with a sponge only what they can absorb, and the rest will bypass them without doing them any harm.

- This is the meaning of the life of every person, children, - Mikhail continued to philosophize. - To seek these talents within oneself and, finding them, serve with their help the surrounding world and the society in which one lives. Do not be afraid and do not run away from yourself and from the country in which you live and were born, but return your debt to it.

A talented person will always and under any conditions find the possibility of a normal human life in his homeland and under any crisis conditions.

Mikhail belatedly noticed how Maka, having finished her chores in the kitchen, was standing at the door to the room, holding a snow-white kitchen towel by one end.

- Do you think that I was not brought there? - Michael asked, turning to face his wife.

- No, no, just that there and it was about myself, - Maka laughed.

- And such talents, children, each person has a lot, so look for yourself, find and realize your talents to the fullest.

- And now all the march to wash your hands and to the kitchen, dinner has been ready for a long time and is waiting for you, - commanded Maka.

- Hooray, - the children yelled, abandoning their studies in an instant and, ahead of each other, rushed to fulfill the command of their mother.

- Well, how do you like the soup? she asked the members of her family sitting at the meal.

- Amazing! Mikhail was the first to exclaim, missing the homemade dish. - Here's one of your mother's most important talents, children, is cooking delicious meals.

Maka beamed and blushed at her husband's praise.

"Really, it's very tasty, ma," the children sitting at the table yelled in one voice.

- Well done, Maka, - Mikhail's mother praised the latter.

- Let's see how you like the second course, mashed potatoes and cutlets?

"We like everything you cook for us, ma," Vaho confirmed.

- Well, well, - Maka agreed, - there is no higher reward for a mother than your praise, children. And it gives me much more pleasure to cook delicious food for you than to do it for myself.

"Here, children, they heard what the mother said, and this is exactly what I told you about, earlier, about the social aspects of a person.

- Misha, Eka called, - Maka stopped her husband, who got up after the meal.

- Yes, and what's new with her? I hope there is good news from Wano?

- From Wano, yes.

- What else?

- My daughter got married, they have a wedding on Saturday, and we are settled.

- Oh, my God, again I will have a booze, - Mikhail pleaded.

- Are you not happy about this?

- No, I'm glad of course, but when I remember that again at the feast I will have to drink, my head is spinning.

- And you do not drink more than the norm, who makes you?

- It's easy for you to say, but at such a feast how can you manage without drinking? And then you complain about my belly.

“Your belly is not so much from drinking as from bread,” Maka explained.

“And by the way, this is not a belly at all, but my authority,” Mikhail proudly declared, slapping his hand on his stomach.

- I dropped you a link in the messenger to a video about ten reasons not to eat bread and nothing starchy foods in general, but you never looked.

- I can't live without bread, Maka, you know I can't eat without it, - Mikhail explained. - As if I had forgotten the saying that bread is the head of everything.

- Bread can only be eaten on the basis of self-grown wheat flour.

- Well, I didn't want to tell you this anecdote.

so you force it.

- Well? Maka looked at him questioningly. - As Miho was asked why he has such a big belly?

Maka continued silently clearing the dishes off the table and placing them in the sink.

- Are you not interested in Miho's answer?

- Interesting, but you've told me about it more than once.

- So what's wrong with that, Maka? You know how I love to repeat the sayings of the sages. Just think about how many thoughts there are in this answer of Miho.

- In what, how and in what will he wear what he allocates?

- Well, yes, only it needs to be pronounced not in beautiful words, but naturally.

- Okay, Misha, what should I say to Eka, will we be at her daughter's wedding? Maka asked.

- Well, yes, of course, where can we go, how can we not be at the wedding of the daughter of a brother-in-law, - Mikhail explained. - Only here again with Alexander it is necessary to agree and change the schedule of duty. By the way, what about covid regulations, are they not afraid of a raging pandemic?

- Eka said that they took this into account, and their tables are set small and only for a maximum of twenty people and in the yard, in compliance with all covid safety rules. Only family members are invited to the wedding.

- Wonderful! - Mikhail said, staring at the ceiling of the kitchen room, and with a song from a children's cartoon went to the living room. - Glory, glory, to the royal appetite!

- Yes, - Maka added, almost catching up with her husband, - she also said that a surprise awaits us at the wedding.

“This is getting interesting,” Michael drawled.

- She didn't really say which one.

- And it is not necessary! Mikhail proudly added, “I can guess it myself.

- Yes ... huh? - Maka said with interest, - and which one?

“Haha, if your cousin didn't tell you about the surprise, then why should I tell you about it, you can't wait, figs.

Female curiosity overwhelmed Maka. She immediately rushed to her favorite mobile phone.

"Eka, Misha says he knows about your surprise and doesn't tell me anything about it either," Maka complained excitedly.

- You both agreed and don't tell me about it?

- Calm down, sister, as if you met your husband today, you know that he is a big fan of spreading fake information.

"You should look at him now, how proud he is sitting on the couch, with his belly thrown out and with such ambition, as if he knows what surprise you are preparing for us, but I don't," Maka almost burst into tears.

"I tell you, Maka, everything he knows, he knows from you and nothing more," Eka, her cousin, reassured. - I will only tell you one thing, sister, that the surprise is very pleasant.

"Okay," Maka began to calm down, wiping tears from her eyes. "I'll give him a lesson for that right now."

- Leave him alone, Maka, please, you know how sometimes men like to show off in front of us. Let him rejoice at least this in life, if there is nothing else.

"Okay," Maka agreed.

On Saturday, the day of the wedding, the weather was unusually good.

Mikhail, running about on business, barely arrived in time for the wedding table of his brother-in-law's daughter, starting before sitting down at the table to get acquainted and greet the invited guests.

- And here is my surprise, Misha, meet Agnetha and her employee Karl, - Eka introduced the foreign guests.

"Very nice," Mikhail greeted politely.

- Heard probably about Agneta from Vano? Eka asked.

- Well, yes, of course, he buzzed all my ears about you, what a good person you are and how you try for him and help arrange his affairs, - Mikhail agreed. - Mr. Karl, my respect, it is very nice to meet you.

- Me, too, Michael. - The guest shook hands with Michael.

- And where are the newlyweds themselves? Mikhail asked.

"They have little preparations in the house, and they will soon come out to us," Eka explained.

Before she had time to finish, a beautiful young couple floated out of the doors of a two-story house - a twenty-year-old beauty, like a white swan, and her chosen one dressed in a black tailcoat.

The exit of the young to the public was met with a noisy ovation.

- Sophia, daughter, I am very happy for you, I congratulate you on the fateful day in your life and wish you all the best, - Mikhail hurried with wishes, waiting for his turn - happiness to you, young people, love, health, harmony and, most importantly, great additions to your family.

- Thank you very much, Uncle Mikhail, - Sophia thanked her father's brother-in-law. A barely audible melody of national music floated in the festively arranged yard, bringing many inflated balloons into light movement with its vibration.

Friendly conversations with the young couple continued for a short time, after which the guests sat down at the wedding table. First of all, the toastmaster was elected.

Mikhail sat down next to Karl, while Agnetha chose a seat opposite. Eka and Maka sat down next to Agneta with their fifteen-year-old son, Datozhka.

Sitting next to Mikhail was an aged couple unfamiliar to him, it seems that they were invited by the groom.

The first toast was traditionally uttered by the toastmaster to the glory of the Lord God, after which a toast followed for the world and the peaceful sky overhead, then for the homeland, the country in which those invited were born and in which they lived and live to this day.

- Indeed, your homeland is excellent, Mikhail, - Karl spoke in broken Russian, - for all these days of staying with you, I really liked both the country and the people, the only thing that is not clear is why yours go abroad so massively and, in particular, to our country with a harsh climate and with a people different from the mentality of your people.

- Oh, Karl, dear, - Mikhail began to explain, - you probably know that in addition to love, the world is also ruled by hunger.

"And women, Michael," added Agnetha, smiling.

"Exactly," Michael agreed with her.

- Yes, but you have such a fertile land, a warm climate, including in winter, why don't people live mainly in villages and do not engage in agriculture, I don't understand?

- Our rural infrastructure is poorly developed, dear Karl.

- Sloth too, Carl. - added an unfamiliar woman who was sitting on the other side of Mikhail.

The cousins diligently tried to give the guests a little bit of different national dishes, naming them. Later, when they had to leave their seats due to the need to serve small tables scattered throughout the yard, they entrusted this function to Mikhail.

- With great pleasure, - Mikhail agreed, - it's my hobby to advertise and explain the origin and name of our dishes.

- Karl, Agnetha, as you can see, we have a very rich cuisine.

- Yes, indeed, you seem to have more dishes than ours, fish prevails in our cuisine, - agreed Agnetha.

- So your country is overseas, - Mikhail added, - but we often have to miss fish and fish products.

Maka glared at Mikhail, index finger pressed to her lips, telling him to weigh the words that came out of his mouth.

- So, get acquainted, friends, with the main trends - dishes from our national cuisine, - Mikhail continued to show off.

- This dish in front of you is called chakhokhbili.

- Very tasty, - Agneta licked her barely painted lips with her tongue.

“But Mr. Carl is now trying a dish called chashushuli,” Mikhail was picking up the speed of advertising.

- Very tasty, - Karl agreed, nodding his head, without stopping the tasting.

- Later, dear guests, if you wish, I will give you recipes for the dishes presented here, - Eka explained.

“Of course, Eka, we ask you very much,” Karl asked.

- Moreover, I must have a book somewhere else about our national cuisine in English, I will give it to you, Agnetha.

- It will be great! – admired the guest.

“Help yourself with Imeretian khachapuri,” Mikhail pushed the plate with the famous dish.

Taking a piece of hot khachapuri from a common plate, the guests tried not to spill the Suluguni cheese, which is widespread in the country, flowing from it on the table.

Mikhail did not forget to serve the dishes also to the woman sitting on the other side.

Agneta, unable to withstand the onslaught of new words-names of the dishes lying on the plates, managed to get a working notebook and a pen and hastily began to write them down in it.

- And this is our lobiani stuffed with red beans.

- Everything is very tasty, - the foreign guests agreed with one voice. - And your wine is fine, and vodka, what do you call it? asked Agnetha.

“Wine and chacha on the table are our homemade preparations,” Maka hastened to brag. - My husband is a hereditary winemaker and he prepares chacha in his village.

- Friends, I will ask you to pay attention to the monitor for a while.

Everyone was frozen in anticipation. After a few beeps, the monitor screen lit up, and the image of the face of the father of the bride seemed to emerge from it.

- Wano! - the voice of several guests rolled.

- My dear relatives and friends! - Ivan began his speech via video link. - I see all of you now perfectly, and my heart is filled with joy and beats twice as fast. My children, newlyweds, once again I congratulate you on your significant day, be happy and love each other for many years. Friends, thank you very much for coming today on this happy and significant day for our children and our entire family. Unfortunately, I am not with you today, but I promise that I will certainly make up for this omission, which is beyond my control, soon at a personal meeting. We will gather, I hope, all together again after my soon arrival.

After warm words of gratitude and greetings from Vano, it was the turn of his parents, who, in turn, thanked the guests who had gathered in the courtyard of their house.

- For parents, for all grandparents who were forced to leave their homeland and are now abroad, - the toastmaster said his next toast.

The guests stood and drank the toast offered by the toastmaster.

- The wine is excellent, Michael, - Karl continued to admire.

“But I like chacha better,” Agneta giggled.

- Here, friends, please have a vegetable snack, Mikhail suggested.

- And what is it called? asked Agnetha.

- This is a pkhali made from edible green grass with spices, but the same red dish is made from beet leaves.

- Simply amazing, - the guests continued to admire the whole range of flavors in different types of dishes laid out in front of their eyes.

- And here it is, con

Of course, the dish you know, - Mikhail suggested, - is badridzhany-eggplant roulettes with walnuts, various herbs and spices.

- I would gladly take some of your spices with me to my homeland, - asked Agnetha.

- With pleasure, no problem, - the hostess of the celebration agreed.

Toasts with a jewelry sequence followed one after another, and in the midst of the feast, lamb skewers cooked on the grill were brought in.

“You haven’t tried Satsivi yet,” Mikhail suddenly drawled.

- And what is it? Karl asked.

“This, my dear Mr. Carl, is turkey meat cooked according to a special recipe in a special sauce.

- Try it first, and then, if you like it, I promise to tell you about its ingredients.

Agneta hurried to enter into her notebook not only everything she saw and tasted, but also the toasts of the toastmaster, diligently translated into Russian by her sitting next to Maka.

Finally, snow-white khinkali were brought on large and wide plates.

Agneta, who managed to take a careless bite, burned her fingers in the khinkali, hot juice, unexpectedly splashed from the inside.

- Well, you know this dish, - Mikhail continued his presentation, not disregarding the unfamiliar woman sitting next to him. - This is tobacco chicken, fried on special clay plates.

- This is guruli, - Mikhail continued, - chicken stew in wine sauce, spices and spices.

- Agneta, it seems to me that I'm about to burst, - Karl pleaded for help.

- I'm with you too, Mr. Carl, - Agnetha joined him with a laugh.

“Where do you put the rest after the festive feast,” Karl suddenly asked.

- As where, nothing is wasted with us, Mikhail, already well drunk, explained, - we are hospitable people, we distribute the rest to neighbors and the needy, and the leftovers go to feed pets.

- Yes, you have everything perfectly built. Only Mikhail, I ask you without offense, if you can, answer me one more question that interests me very much, - the foreign guest, also fairly tipsy, began his speech. - Tell me, please, how people brought up by your country, where there is so much love, warmth, hospitality, so many beautiful sights and all the very best, including your cuisine, turn into violators of law and order and fall under legal proceedings in the EU countries, of which only certain individuals face the fate of deportation, and the rest - imprisonment.

Tell me, please, your country is, in fact, a piece of paradise, and why is it so difficult for you to equip it so that the country and all the people living in it prosper and develop, huh?

- Indeed, Mikhail, I heard a lot of words of praise from Vano about your homeland, but our visit to you and what we saw here exceeded all our expectations to such an extent that we achieved the unthinkable from our officials - extending our business trip for a couple of days, - Agneta continued .

- You see, friends, you are asking a far from easy question that torments almost every inhabitant of our country, but I will answer you this way ...

Mikhail again caught the stern silent look of his wife.

"Understood," he agreed and hiccupped a couple of times. "To get reliable answers," Mikhail didn't say, but almost muttered under his breath, "for this you need to spend much more time visiting us than on this visit," Mikhail deftly dodged.

Yes, yes, Maka. - Mikhail answered the approving smile of his wife, - I just got a little tipsy, but I survived crazy.

Relatively fresh and sober, she stayed at Agneta's table, despite the fact that she drank, basically, the chacha she liked terribly, but at the same time skillfully applied the brakes, as soon as she felt approaching the red line of intoxication, she paused, which allowed her to continue to remain sober.

- You see, Mikhail, you can, of course, not answer our question, but the fact is that, as a friend, I confess to you the reason for our visit to you ... We considered at government and interdepartmental meetings the issues of migration of your citizens to our country. And I must confess to you that all the statistical data and other materials that we brought with us and presented to our colleagues from your country are by no means in your favor. Massive violations of the rules and disobedience to the police, can drastically reduce the number of people who will be allowed to enter from your country.

- Well, so much the better, dear Carl. In this case, we will have to eat each other, and not indulge in the bliss of culinary delicacies at events like this, - Mikhail burst out laughing, tapping Karl on the shoulder in a friendly way.

At the end of the festive feast, the rumble and noise of conversations coming from the tables scattered around the yard gradually increased.

Almost each of the guests present proved his point of view and vision of a particular issue to the interlocutor.

- Madam, allow me, - Mikhail, who was already pretty drunk, took the hand of the woman sitting next to him and kissed her, thanking her for the fellowship.

- Who are you? - her husband reacted no less than Michael, who was pretty tipsy. - Will you leave my wife alone or not?

And carried

Despite the fact that his wife was pulling him away, and Mack arrived in time to help Mikhail, they did not succeed in putting out the heat of contention until the opponent, with a dodgy movement, freed himself from the guardianship of his wife and drove a right hook in the face of Mikhail.

Unable to keep his balance on his feet, Mikhail fell to the ground, dragging Maka, who was holding him tenaciously, behind him.

Eka, who came running to help, hurried to take her foreign guests to the house.

And the rest of the "saviors" who came running very quickly defused the tense situation, despite the fact that the brawler spewed obscenities and curses at the defeated opponent.

- I'll kill the reptile, I'll destroy it, I've been fooling my wife all day today. I won't leave it like that, mind you, I'll still find you and kill you, so you know, you hear.

But Mikhail, having settled down more comfortably, has already chosen a place to sleep.

Not without the help of peaceful rescuers who came to the rescue, Mikhail was brought into Eka's house and put him right in his clothes on a free bed, throwing a warm blanket over him.

Mikhail completely surrendered to the boundless will of sleep, rocking him as if on a swing and delivering, as it seemed to him, much more pleasure than the entire wedding meal.

Soon, a black foreign car, called by Agneta on her mobile phone, arrived for foreign guests.

Karl was already sitting in the front seat of the foreign car next to the driver, the car started up with the rear door open, waiting only for the arrival of another passenger, a woman who was standing opposite her rival, who still did not know about her husband's secret adventures.

Two young women, silently saying goodbye, looked into each other's eyes for a long time with pain associated with their common beloved man.

One seemed to ask for forgiveness, and the other for the well-being of her beloved husband.

They were united and separated by boundless love for one man, Vano.

Only women understand the language of glances, facial expressions, tirelessly washing the coastal shores of their hearts from the inside.

It suddenly seemed to Maka that she managed to catch something important in their views and silently watched her rivals.

"I beg you, take care of him," Eka whispered in Agneta's ear, almost crying and as if yielding her husband to a hitherto unknown stranger and hugging her with all her strength, almost the same as she hugged her beloved husband.

- I promise you, - Agneta said, freeing herself from her embrace and looking into her eyes.

- I promise you, Eka, to protect him in every possible way and help him with his affairs and documents so that he is given at least a temporary green card of our country, and then, you see, you and your children will be able to come to us.

"Everything will be fine, Eka," Karl promised in turn, opening his car door, "we will arrange everything for him. Let's go Agnetha, otherwise we'll be late.

- Maybe you could stay a couple more days, Agnetha?

- No, Eka, what are you talking about, we have already been delayed here, - Agneta explained, - we will still have to answer for this before our superiors.

- Tomorrow I will not have time to see you again?

- Are we leaving at five o'clock in the morning?

We will sleep, at least a little, before the road, and you will rest, because there is so much work you have left after us.

- It's nothing, Agnetha. - Eka's eyes filled with tears, - goodbye and thank you very much for everything.

Eka's tears deeply touched Agneta's soul, in a fit of feelings, she kissed Eka on the lips, which was strength. Then she threw it again, in parting: Goodbye and thanks for everything, - she deftly dived into the car and, slamming the cab door, commanded: - Let's go.

XXIV

A rare and long-awaited drizzle made you think about the need to take a portable umbrella with you before leaving the house?

The half-full grocery cart seemed to whisper to him about the umbrella: leave it, why do you need it, only the extra weight will be on your way and create a lot of inconvenience.

But outside the threshold of the house, in the entrance, the sound of rain told him the opposite: take an umbrella with you, stay away from me, because right now I need to cry on you.

In the minibus, the radio was tuned to the news wave.

Belatedly started vaccination in the country already on the third day, sacrificed a doctor of one of the provincial clinics, a girl of twenty-seven years old, for her recovery, which the whole country was ill with.

These days, the main topic of discussion was precisely this question, which was added to the poignancy by a short video shown on television, in which they showed her vaccination against the coronavirus, and an interview about the benefits of such vaccination and the need for it.

Literally thirty minutes later, she became ill, and despite the fact that she was transported on time to the capital's hospital, where the best doctors fought for her life for several days, they failed to save her.

In the hands it was necessary not only to skillfully hold a half-closed umbrella, but also to ask for a card from the front door of the office, and to be able to skillfully roll a food cart through the turnstile of the office reception.

Having barely coped with the task and not having time to reach his office, he heard from him a long call on the internal telephone.

- Alexander, is that you? An unfamiliar male voice called over the phone.

- Yes.

- We were watching you when you entered the office, why didn't you pass the thermal screening and didn't make a corresponding entry in the monitoring log.

- I'm guilty, of course, - Alexander tried to justify himself, - I'll immediately return and regularly make my mistake.

- Sandro, it's me, Merab, forgive me, it's just that we, the guys from the cameras of the lower post, watched your arrival and decided to check you, - a work colleague explained jokingly.

- Ahh, well, I understand, - Alexander dropped with relief.

- Why are you so busy today?

What do you see for the first time?

- Yes, but what happens so often?

- I have to bandage my duties for several days, but sometimes I still want to eat.

- Despite everything?

- Well, yes! And stocking up on products from hypermarkets is a bit expensive.

- A little?

- You know, after all, what is the salary of employees of the administrative service.

- Yes, especially in comparison with the salaries of some directors and heads of departments, - Merab agreed. - Okay, I won't bother you anymore, because I'm home, and you'll be on duty until the morning. Happy and calm duty, Sandro.

- Yeah, thank you, - thanked Alexander, who hurried to get rid of the handset of the phone and free his hand for other things.

- You were just not enough for my head, I would be better off doing my own thing, - Alexander thought.

Three hours remained before the main round of the office, the time that Alexander used, as a rule, to receive information via the Internet.

Among the first news was the tragic information about the death of one of the friends, with whom in the past they made more than one hiking trip to the sights of the country.

Memories involuntarily surfaced in my memory, connected with trips along with colleagues from an old job from one of the academic institutes, which continued later in a conversation with an old employee.

- Do you remember, Nana, what a strong climber our Geno was?

- Of course, I remember.

- And how fast he walked on campaigns, we barely caught up with him.

- Don't tell me, that's what life is - a villain. I called him the snow leopard. How many times he was spared from the death of the mountain, but the rhythm of city life did not spare him at all. He returned safe and sound from a very difficult and dangerous mountain route, and in the city he was hit by a car, chained to bed for a long time.

- We all go from nowhere to nowhere, we are all caught up by chance, the words of Alexander Blok are perfectly reflected in his example.

- If not for this tragic incident, he would have lived in the world for a long time, but, as they say, you can't escape fate.

- I also have a lot of stories related to joint campaigns with him, he was always ready to help at any moment. Rest in peace!

- Amen! You know, he so quickly broke away from us on campaigns that when it was difficult to catch up with him, then the guys and I found antidotes against his high-speed walking.

- What is it?

- We soldered him with vodka during halts, after which his steps slowed down significantly and became almost on a par with ours.

- Hee-hee, - there was a slight chuckle in the mobile phone.

- And how are your Tiniko and Lado, is there anything new in their personal lives?

- No, I'm so worried about them.

- How old are they now?

- Far beyond the right age to start a family.

- Tiniko had a suitor who courted her.

- Yes, he swam.

- Why not?

- Nothing serious on his mind, he just wants to walk with her, and she gave him enough time so that he could make his mind up.

a solid offer, but everything does not want to, but this type of relationship does not suit her in any way.

- And then there's that damned crown, perhaps?

- No, even before her he did not dare to take a serious step, and as she once put it, she does not at all want to be a doll in his hands.

- It's a pity, I so hoped that she, albeit with some delay, but still something worthwhile with him would improve ...

- We all hoped so too, but what to do now?

- Well, why doesn't Lado get on with arranging his life?

- You can't even imagine what things he tells me about the consumer views of modern girls.

- What is the age, such is the poet, as they say, - Alexander tried to explain, - when and where was this in our time?

- Exactly, but each time gives birth to its own children, and we are generally children of another time and another country.

- It is you who, due to lack of time, do not have complete information about this issue, but it is much worse.

- What are you saying, and what else?

- In one video on YouTube, they directly answer this question with its name - there is no love, humble yourself! And in another, for example, it is said about why modern women treat men as ..., I don't even want to finish.

- So many divorces around the country and lonely people, who will eventually get our country if it continues like this?

- Foreigners, of course. They have already flooded our country and occupied the central avenues of our city.

I remembered one story why the dinosaurs actually died out.

- I wonder why?

- It turns out, because they stopped going on dates.

- Ha-ha-ha. It's funny if it weren't so deplorable.

- Yes, what to talk about, Nana, so as not to go far, I can cite a case from my life when ten years ago, when I committed the biggest stupidity in my life, marrying a divorcee with a triple trailer, with three adult sons already living in the countryside with his father.

- And what made you decide to take such a step?

- Love and affection.

"Then why did you divorce her so soon?"

- She became completely different after marriage. She promised me to give birth to a child, and then, probably considering that everything was settled for her after registering the marriage at the registry office and from the wedding in the church, she took it and changed her mind in an instant, forgetting about her promise to give birth to three children.

Calls somehow at three o'clock in the morning when I was on duty at work, and declares that she will not give birth to me a single one, they say, she already has three of her own from her first husband, this is enough from her, and that if I

really love her, then I am content and will accept only her children, refusing my own, can you imagine what impudence?

- So she was in love not with you, but with your apartment.

- Naturally! What is it, if not a selfish and consumer marriage? So your Ladoshka is partly right.

- How did you not figure it out at one time, if she lived with you and looked after your sick father.

- And then after me, when I broke a bone in my foot and moved around the house on crutches. Father agitated both her and me, worried about not leaving me behind, alone. So, with good intentions, as they say.

Having said goodbye to his interlocutor soon, Alexander decided to make a round of the office ahead of time in the hope that by closing it ahead of time, he would be able to continue working quietly on the Internet.

Passing during the round on the fourth floor, he heard a woman's crying from a room familiar to him at the end of the corridor. Quickening his pace, Alexander went into it and saw how a young employee was sobbing in a low voice, burying her face in her left hand lying on the table.

- Katy? he said in surprise.

The girl was in no hurry to raise her little head, as if continuing to revel in her occupation.

Alexander carefully sat down next to her and, stroking her on the head, tried to calm her down.

- What's wrong with you, Katie?

The girl lifted her head and looked into his eyes.

- Has anyone offended you? Alexander asked.

The girl broke away from his embrace for a moment and, frozen from crying, clung to Alexander's lips in a kiss.

- What's wrong with you, daughter? he asked the girl again. She continued to sob.

- This is an old and long story, Sandro, you can't explain it in a nutshell, and then, why do you need it?

- I'm ready to listen to you, Keti, - Alexander continued to reassure the girl.

- And what about your tour of the office? A slight smile flickered from her lips.

- I already did it.

- And the office closed?

- No, not yet.

- But are you going to?

- Yes, of course, otherwise I will lose my job.

"I understand," Katie said sadly.

"But I won't let you leave the office until you explain to me the reason for your tears." Alexander gently wiped a tear from her cheek.

Suddenly, she unexpectedly hugged Alexander again, and wrapping her arms around his neck, buried her face in his shoulder.

“Will you protect me, if anything?”

- Yes, of course, - Alexander assured her in surprise, - only for this I need to at least know from whom or from what.

Keti moved away from his embrace for a moment and, lowering her head, reluctantly began her story.

- I don't want to go home, and I have nowhere else to go, you know?

- Why, what si studied?

You promise not to tell anyone.

- Promise.

- At home, my parents constantly quarrel, I'm already tired of hearing their disassembly. I want affection and love, Sandro, but you understand... She again buried her face in his shoulder, continuing to betray family secrets.

- And how does your little sister endure all this?

- She is still small, she is only twenty-two years old, and also often flees from home to her friends.

Parents did not hold back the brakes even when I had the stupidity to invite my chosen one to our house a couple of years ago.

- AND...?

- Shortly after that, he sent me a message with an apology, such as that he was looking for a girl from a prosperous family. You won't yell at me like that and beat me, will you?

- No, of course, - Alexander was surprised at the girl's question. - Try to calm down, I'll go to close the office, and I know where to attach you comfortably and in a secluded place, just warn your parents that you will stay at work, okay?

"Okay," Kate agreed happily.

Soon they secretly entered the guest room, where there was a large aquarium with beautiful multi-colored fish.

- Have you decided to put me to sleep with these fish? Katie chuckled a little.

- What's scary? They are peaceful and silent and know how to keep any secrets.

“Hee hee,” the blue-eyed blonde chuckled, “is it probably because their mouths are full of water?”

“Probably,” Alexander casually threw, “you sit here on the sofa, and I will bring my pillow and cape so that you don't get cold at night.”

“Wait,” she grabbed Alexander's hand, “stay with me, at least a little, I beg you,” and seated him next to her on the sofa, again burying her head in his chest.

Alexander continued to stroke Keti's head, melting her soul, heart and body more and more.

Together with it, the body of Alexander melted.

- Katie, I have to go! - Alexander firmly decided in time to warn against unpredictable developments.

"Wait a little longer, I beg you," the girl begged, sitting on top of him and gently caressing the unshaven skin of a man who was her age as a father.

- Don't, Katie, please, do you hear? Alexander almost begged.

- Shh, shut up, otherwise they can hear us, - the girl continued to kiss him, who began to carefully unbutton the buttons of his shirt.

- What are you doing Katie, I'm your father fit? - continued, freeing himself from her lips, to warn Alexander.

"Please be quiet," the girl pleaded.

- Don't, please.

"Wow, what an interesting one," came the reply. She pressed on Alexander's face with the already protruding nipples of her bare snow-white breasts.

With one movement of her hand, she instantly freed herself from her underwear, and throwing it aside, began to sink to the surface of the sofa, overcoming Alexander's slight resistance and dragging him further and deeper into the endless rainbow world of love and voluptuousness.

Have you had anyone before me? he whispered in her ear, unable to resist.

- What does it matter now? she said to him in reply, smiling and throwing both legs over his shoulders.

"You and I are both crazy," he commented to her after it was all over.

- This is usually said after the third time, - Katie grinned in response.

- Are you really crazy?

- It's his own fault, why didn't he let me go home, probably, he himself wanted the same, but didn't have the courage to say?

- Tomorrow we will both be driven from work.

- Why do you think so?

So there are surveillance cameras everywhere.

But not in this same room.

- And the fish?

- What are fish?

Do you think they didn't see anything?

"God, are you really that stupid or are you just pretending to be?" After all, he himself said that their mouths are filled with water, which is why they are safe. Come to me.

- Good morning, Alexander! - a voice woke up on a mobile phone, - how was the duty?

- Good, batono Bezhan, good! - as if swallowing his tongue, Alexander answered belatedly, - did he really find out about everything, Alexander shuddered with fright.

- Today the workers should come and build a doorway of one of the rooms on the fifth floor with bricks, follow them, okay?

- Good! - Alexander answered in a trembling, frightened voice, turning to face the snow-white beauty, who was already standing behind him, at full height in what her mother gave birth to.

- So we got stuck with you, Katie, - Alexander barely said, bowing his head.

- How do you know?

- Feel.

“Don't take it into your head,” Katie soothed, pulling on her underwear and all the rest of the clothes casually scattered on the floor. - Get dressed as soon as possible and feed the fish, my big but little fool.

Soon Katie left the room of night adventures, leaving Alexander alone with his thoughts and worries.

XXV

- How do philosophers say about life?

- That it is a slow death, and that one who does not want to die should not be born.

- What ridiculous nonsense! Who wants to die while alive? Unless a hopelessly ill person, either in body or mind. Thea was talking to herself.

- Or, for example, like one of the classics - it's hard to die, it's good to die.

- In due time, perhaps? After all, everything has its time.

Only one thing can be indisputable, thoughts multiply sorrow, - unable to resist the temptation, Thea lit a menthol cigarette and, taking a deep breath of fragrant smoke, added, smiling, - and the men drive it away.

How many unfinished cups of coffee and undersmoked cigarettes, not to mention many other things, can a person who has not lived to old age lose? Thea thought with horror.

Yes, indeed, only on the edge of the abyss, and even when dancing on it, can one really feel in full the price and taste of a healthy and happy life and what grace is life, but alas, sometimes we can't choose either time or fate .

"Having no value and losing crying, after my procedures it's so difficult for me to breathe, but now that my breath is free and free, what I do with it, persecute and kill," she was indignant at the audacity of her act. - For the sake of momentary pleasure, we ruin the rest of our lives.

How did Alexander once confess to me? Eternity without you, I would prefer moments of happiness with you, - Thea considered the dying cigarette.

Then there were a few more sips of cold coffee and a few deep puffs of cigarettes.

"Now, when the cup of life has been fully drunk, you can fully devote yourself to the Internet," Thea's desire flashed, and looking at a color photograph of a three-masted sailboat in the Internet ocean of the computer desktop, she blew on it, "forward my love, my dream!"

And her sailboat sailed on the waves of the site of the boundless Internet existence.

But Skype calls, like shots from a signal starting cannon, postponed the departure of the sailboat for a while.

- Hello, daughter, - Thea said affably, seeing the joyful face of Veriko and her son-in-law, - hello, Levan, how are you, what's new with you?

"Congratulate us too, mother," the daughter continued to beam with joy.

- What is it, what happened?

- I was able to do it, I became a woman, finally, - the daughter exclaimed and joyfully fixed her gaze in the direction of her husband.

- Well, it finally happened, thank God. Well, how now?

- Now everything is fine with us! True, it hurt and at the beginning it was a little scary.

Did the psychologist really help?

- No, - the daughter laughed, - love, - and pressed her lips towards her husband's lips.

- Well, now, I hope you are not burning with the desire to come to me from your husband? Thea smiled.

- Nope ... - drawled her daughter with a satisfied smile.

"Our plans have now changed," added the son-in-law.

- What else is there?

- Levan and I are planning to break into the states for permanent residence, how do you look at it, mom?

"Oh my god..." Thea groaned. - but not this, daughter, are you out of your mind without me?

- Well, why, mom? Do you see what is happening in our country? This confusion and confrontation will last God knows how long and probably will not end soon. And to live, all the time on your handouts, we are tired and we are already ashamed, - the daughter admitted.

- No, no and no again, Veriko, I warn you, this is only if you want me dead. You know that I have no one in the world except you, I only live by you.

- Well, why, mother, you have a wonderful family there, grandfather is still alive, God grant him long life, and we do not want to remain in the poverty of a madhouse.

- No, I said, - It seemed to Thea that her heart stopped for a moment, and without taking a breath, she added, - and then where are you now, in such a difficult time, during the coronavirus pandemic and the ban on flights, you know that now in the states the most difficult epidemiological situation.

- Mom, well, we are not going to leave tomorrow, but we are only planning, Levan has close relatives there, who promised us all-round assistance there in everything.

"But how to go there, we will find a way, just don't worry, but it's all the same to communicate with each other via Skype and the Internet, after all, we will be here, at home, or there, in the states," the son-in-law supported his wife in his arguments.

- No, I said Levan, - Thea insisted.

- Well, mom, why are you so unfair, and stand in the way of your daughter's happiness all the time?

- Hmm, all the time? Thea chuckled. - What do you understand in happiness, Veriko, if you give birth yourself, then you can and will understand all my experiences.

"Well, mom, I beg you," the daughter groaned, "we will fly to visit you, and you will come to us when the situation with this damned pandemic settles down.

- To whom do you leave your homeland, foreigners? If all of you young go away and leave her forever... have you ever thought about it.

- Of course, they thought, anyway, there is someone, you did exactly the same, only with the difference that you chose another country, which is closer.

"Don't you dare talk to your mother like that," Thea threatened, "what do you even know about me, my life and my choice?" I have there was no other choice.

- And we, too, mother, - the daughter continued to beg.

- Who will bury me? - jumped out of Thea's mouth, because of her fright, she almost betrayed the secret about her health.

- It's enough for you to die, mom, what a time at your age, you still have your whole life ahead of you.

- What do you know about how much I have ahead of me? - Thea suddenly remembered that her family knew absolutely nothing about her health problems, and bit her tongue in time, covering her eyes with both hands that had really shed a tear.

- Well, mom, - Levan suddenly intervened, having managed to orient himself in the situation in time, - we still have distant plans for this, we have not decided anything concrete yet, we will discuss this issue with you later.

- No, I said, this is my final answer, - Thea sobbed, hurried to disconnect the Skype connection.

My whole life is some kind of nightmarish series of stunning and murderous losses, - Thea demala, - and the village in which I grew up, my first fatal marriage, then my homeland, my only love - Alexander, the loss of my second child, my health and now my daughter and son-in-law also cocked the trigger to shoot me right in the heart. Lord, have mercy on me and save my entire large family, I beg you, I have never done anything bad to anyone in my life, neither to you nor to anyone. Please, Thea snapped, burying her face in the pillow of her room's bed.

She couldn't remember the last time she had sobbed so hard from the pain that was tearing her inside out.

My homeland is love and paradise for me, who cursed and punished you like that, for what and for what sins? Thea continued to sob, looking at the 3D map of her country. Lord, you promised to give me everything if I obey you, tell me, please, where and when did I disobey you?

Leave your worries to the Almighty, and let Him raise you, - she heard the comforting answer of her inner voice.

Soon, a faint voice of an old woman was heard from the next room, calling for her help.

"Ma-ma, ma-ma," her voice called plaintively.

Entering her room, Thea saw that the woman had rolled off the bed onto the floor.

- Lord, my dear, how did you manage? - Thea ran up to the old woman lying on the floor and tried to seat her, and after the cost of incredible efforts, lifted her onto the bed.

- How are you, my dear? Thea stroked the sick head. - You have weakened me in recent days from an internal emotional state. But you know me perfectly well that you and I can't change this world or people, so why are you tearing yourself up and killing yourself, life is much stronger than us, and you still can't come to terms with it and get used to your current situation.

It suddenly seemed to her that she was talking to her patient about what she should have done in her own life.

"Now I will make your saving vitaminized cocktail that will give you strength, but for now, take this soothing pill and drink it," she suggested to the patient.

- Ma-ma, ma-ma, - plaintively thanked the woman.

From the very first steps into the kitchen, Thea felt a sharp pain in her groin.

- That's just what I needed right now, - flashed through her head.

Gradually, the pain overshadowed what had happened to the old woman, forcing her to quickly eliminate the consequences of the fall.

The well-known words of her beloved poet Rilke surfaced in her memory - and she is no longer the same as she was at the beginning, other people's fates, having become her fate, recognizing her, take her away.

Soon Julia came to the rescue, running for a short time to her friend.

- Am I out of time? she asked.

- You are always on time, my dear, - Thea was delighted at her arrival.

So the old woman had to drink her fortified cocktail in the company of two foreign women.

Gossiping among themselves about their adventures, the friends parted after half an hour of communication with each other, unsaid and undiscussed agreed to exchange in the evening, via Skype messenger.

She reassured Julia, resorting to the motto of Kozma Prutkov: - Bewildered by fate, you still do not despair, - and she was surprised at the reality of the saying that every horse thinks that there is more of it.

Be patient and remember, Joe, that we have nowhere to retreat and we cannot surrender either, for our homeland is behind us, our paradise, temporarily abandoned by us, but, thank God, not yet lost.

- You know, Thea, I recently read from a classic that three things make a person happy: love, an interesting job and the opportunity to travel, and which of these three do we have in full? However, as they say, do not admit someone else's guilt, - Julia dropped dejectedly.

"Yes, it's not in vain that they say that the fate of a person is in his character, which in many ways we inherit from our parents once, and then we acquire from life itself, from the environment," Thea agreed. - But the fate of a person is, first of all, his family and relatives, and all his surroundings.

- And it was also rightly said by one smart person that if you fall in love with a man, then you cannot marry him, as he can make you unhappy.

- And what about without love, Joe?

- One love, as a rule, in most cases, is not enough exactly. Love melts with time, Thea, believe me, and various psychologists predict it initially, from three to eight years. And they also say that if a woman knew who she was marrying, and a man knew who she was marrying, then there would not be a single wedding in the world, cool, no? Julia asked.

"Ma-ma, ma-ma," the old woman seemed to agree with her.

- Where do you think the exit is? Thea asked.

"In the impossibility of love," said Julia, smiling. - How simple it is, isn't it?

- Hmm, - Thea chuckled, - in the impossibility of love, and you are driving there too. Do you want me to read you one poem by Alexander, dedicated to me at the time of his ruthless execution of my love for him and my soul?

"Of course," Julia confirmed curiously.

"Then listen," Thea began.

You are my Galla

Although I'm not Dali

My love and muse

Even though they are far away from me.

Again the winds compose their song

About the impossibility of love

In this mortal world

Look for your love in the next world,

Where there are no factors that interfere with love!

Strong, isn't it? Strongly and painfully, - remarked Thea.

- Exactly! A hit right in the ten, - confirmed Julia.

"I still don't accept that approach to love, Joe.

- Why, girlfriend? I'll tell you even more, here Catherine Deneuve, for example, claims that the best way to keep a man's love is not to marry him.

- With this, perhaps, it is impossible not to agree, at least in part, - Thea philosophized after some thought.

- So rejoice in the eternal love of your Alexander for you.

- I do not need such love, Joe, without the closeness of feelings, relationships, bodies and minds of both.

"And I can confess to you one impossible, or rather, failed love," Julia hastened to brag in her turn.

- Well, come on, post it as soon as possible, - Thea began to rush her friend Thea with no less interest.

"Ay," Julia sighed, "it was true, it was a very long time ago, but I also had one poet admirer in my life.

"Interesting," Thea drawled, alert for what she was about to hear.

"He was such an interesting young man, a little strange and timid," Julia beamed, bringing a blush to her face. - He wrote me poems, declarations of love,

and then made paper airplanes from these leaves and let them through my window.

"Ha, ha, ha," the girlfriends almost burst with laughter.

"God, how stupid these men are, and if you ask them, they are sure that they are smarter than us," Thea continued to laugh. - So what is next? What did you do with these airplanes next?

"I read them, laughed, and then burned them," Julia sighed.

- But why?

Why did I need them?

- How, did not one of his poems touch your soul?

- Hurt! Especially the last one, I kept it in my notebook for a long time. True, later I regretfully had to burn it too.

- Well, why, girlfriend? Thea was surprised.

- He was so timid and indecisive that during our chance meetings on the street he barely nodded his head to me and shyly took it aside. But then the repeated requests of my aunt and his last airplane finally touched my soul, and I agreed to go to the name day to our neighbors, where he was also invited. Later I found out that this was done specifically for our rapprochement.

"How interesting," Thea squealed, shifting in her seat. - By God, I will not die until I know the continuation of this story.

- In that case, I will hide this story from you, until the end of your days, - Julia smiled back.

- No, no, what are you, girlfriend, please continue, I was just joking. So what happened next?

- And then there was nothing!

- How so?

- I lingered in front of the mirror because of the makeup for only five minutes, which was enough for my crazy husband to come for me and forcefully take me to his parents, introduce them to me as his bride.

- Oh, - Thea broke off suddenly. - Well, what about you?

- And what was I to do. Naturally, by will - not by will, I had to agree with his insistence and now I have what I have.

- How so, but how is he? Thea groaned regretfully.

- He, as I found out later, also started a family, and then completely went abroad with her. But I don't care about him, probably, it's unlikely that it would have worked out.

- Why? - plaintively held out Thea.

- Well, if only because their family were also refugees from our lands and at that time were very poor, and the prospect of being beaten is lucky, it didn't seem very rosy to me, especially since my younger brother had to be a support and aunt. And Tengiz and his family were more independent.

- It turns out that you married for money? Thea wondered.

- Fu..., - Julia sighed, - probably not only because of this. Tengiz just turned out to be more persistent and purposeful.

"What a pity," Thea said.

- Of course, very sorry - a bird. Too well and beautifully she chirped.

- And the last airplane is also very sorry, - Thea felt sad. - Do you even remember at least some lines from his airplanes?

- Only from the very last one, which I finally had to burn, but from the memory of the page

These eyes, alas, are not erased.

"Read them to me, please, I beg you," Thea almost pounced on her friend, taking her hands in her arms.

- Oh, Thea, you are starting to seriously stir up my past and my feelings, because Tengiz caused me more than one mental pain during our time together.

- Well, even more so, - Thea did not subside in requests.

"All right," Julia agreed, "just give me some time to get myself together."

- Hurrah, hurray, hurray, - Thea began to jump with joy.

- Well, listen, the poem is called "Agate Beads of Happiness."

- How interesting. Thea clapped her hands.

- Maybe I'm not exactly quoting it now, but it will be very close to the text.

"Okay," Thea agreed happily.

- Well, listen:

The tears have dried up

Lines of rhyme lost

Taste of meaning escapes from life,

But I'm still looking for you

And I wake up at night

I call you without words...

I ask you for a little

Be brave, don't be afraid to try.

You are the feelings of my piercing rays.

I run on new continuous lines,

of my restless letter,

And day after day I string, as if on a thread,

The words that call you, the enchanting cascade,

Agate beads of happiness

But you are still dumb.

Well, wake up at last and have pity.

Because of you I came to sleepless nights

Instead of a beloved pillow hugging,

I don't get tired of going a little crazy

Maybe because I'm tired of life.

Or maybe from what I need

Barren clouds of feelings thickened,
Don't love, don't love
Do not want - do not want
But goodbye give a smile
And let me just wish:
So that you are more lucky in life
Find your love, your sorrow...

Thea leaned back in her chair, spellbound by the lines she had heard.

- Girlfriend, what's wrong with you? - Julia rushed to help Thea, lightly slapping her cheeks and trying to bring her to her senses as soon as possible.

In time, Thea woke up and began to look at Julia with surprise.

- Are you okay? Julia asked excitedly.

"Yes, yes," Thea agreed in a low voice. - It's just that for a moment I felt a great resemblance between your poet and Alexander.

- If I knew that everything would end with this, I would not tell you about this verse, - Julia tried to justify herself.

- No, on the contrary, thank you very much for that. Your verse once again assured me of my feelings for Alexander. Why are they so bad, and we are unhappy? Thea said in a low voice.

- Who are they, Thea?

- Your poet and my Alexander.

- Or maybe it's the other way around?

"Perhaps," Thea said in a whisper, "and why do we need to be unhappy in order to be happy?" Why why why? Thea threw herself into Julia's arms and burst into tears.

- Probably because they were born under the wrong stars. Julia tried to explain.

- But we do not choose the stars, but they choose us.

- In this case, the origins of all our failures should probably be sought in our past life?

Are you talking about the past?

And what do we have in the present?

"Correcting the mistakes of both past and present lives," Julia retorted.

- Me, me, be, - the old woman muttered, trying to break into the conversation of her friends, as if wanting to give some examples from her life.

"What a pity for the poor thing," Julia remarked, how much she probably has something to tell, but, as the fish said, I can't, because my mouth is clogged with water.

- My Alexander claims that now he would trade minutes of life with me for an eternity without me.

- Where was he before?

On the way to me, I guess.

- And, unfortunately, was delayed on the way. Oh, my friend, my advice to you, it's all wasted nerves, time, feelings and your remaining vitality, which are so necessary to fight the disease. Tell him not to swing their fists after a fight.

"Perhaps you are right," Thea agreed despondently, "but how difficult it is to know and, accordingly, to put your knowledge into practice, just like to advise in words, and not to follow advice in deeds.

- Thea, you once told me that a person's whole life flows through crossroads, and our whole subsequent life depends on which path we choose.

- Without the right and opportunity to correct our miscalculations and mistakes?

- Most often yes! We can be forgiven a lot by heaven only with prayers, but to return the past and change at least something in our lives, this has never been given to us!

- How good, after all, that I have you, you and Rico, my most faithful and kind friends in this world, thank you very much, Julia, for everything!

- And thank you, dear, - Julia hugged her friend.

- Yes, and goodbye, as they say, and in the end, - added Thea, lowering her head.

- Well? Julia asked questioningly.

- If I die unexpectedly, then promise me that you will do everything to transport my body to my homeland, to my village, but for now, know that absolutely no one from my family knows about my health problems and you don't tell them either about it, okay?

- Good! - A friend agreed, - but only on one condition that you will not die earlier than in a hundred years. Deal?

- Deal! Thea agreed, shaking hands with her friend and walking her to the entrance.

one gate of the house of a sick old woman.

Thea continued to follow her friend with her eyes for some time, and soon, losing sight of her, involuntarily glanced at the sky, enjoying the spectacle of amazing beauty - a caravan of cirrus clouds.

"Take me with you," Thea pleaded.

XXVI

- It's just incomprehensible to the mind, what kind of optimist Thea is in love, - Julia continued to be surprised to herself, - I tell her everything about one thing, by personal example, and she's all about her own. But alas, nothing can be done about it, as they say, blessed are those who believe!

Well, he doesn't believe me yet, let him at least believe the famous classic who claimed that the modern world is so rotten that even falling in love with someone is the biggest risk we can afford. And that people have forgotten how to love and consumer relations rule the world.

Well, as for my relationship with Konstantin, this may be the case, but this is partly in my favor, but in her case? Such a man as her Alexander cannot even dream of having a rich, twelve years younger chosen-beauty in his homeland, and here she herself climbs into his arms, and he keeps clapping his ears.

The only surprising thing is whose word allowed him to abandon her at the time - an idiot. You see, as he once expressed to Thea why he had not connected his life with any woman for so long, he answered proudly that he loved and loves to arrange certain tests for each of them, which they did not even pass on a three according to the old five-point system, but with he did not want to deal with doubles. And what did you get as a result? He himself remained in the Losers, and now he is running after the departed train in the person of Thea and is trying to disconnect her from her husband who guides her through life and cares for her.

And Thea is also good, but, by the way, as they say, love is blind and deaf, you will love a goat, and my Konstantin is an example of this, "Julia chuckled to herself.

Sipping coffee in her bedroom, she secretly twisted Konstantin's ill-fated gold bracelet in her hand, trying through a magnifying glass to see on it the inscription engraved on its inside.

- As a token of our eternal and inseparable love, - Julia read the lines on the bracelet with difficulty.

- Here you have eternal and inseparable love, stupid woman, you see how soon he changed you for me, younger and more beautiful, and I'm even more than sure that he will do the same with me at the first opportunity. But where will he find someone as beautiful and young as me? Julia perked up.

"If I return this bracelet to the owner, then everyone will convict me of stealing it," she thought, but what tormented her soul most of all was that she was cheating on her husband, and most importantly, she was destroying someone else's family.

Finding no way out of the current situation, she ran away with all her might from resolving this issue, hoping that time, if she had the opportunity, would resolve all issues by itself, and tried to run away from them whenever she had similar thoughts. And now she switched to the topic of the gold rush, which has been so feverish for all of humanity, for the entire time of its existence.

- What is so magical about you? she asked the gold bracelet, turning it around. Your exquisite beauty or your inner qualities, and maybe your soul? The soul of the person who owns you, because it was not in vain that it was once said by a classic that you can fall in love with beauty, but you can love only the soul. I love not only beauty, but from now on also your soul, - Julia confessed to the bracelet and, bringing it to her lips, began to kiss it gently, and then, putting it to her heart, she closed her eyes and confessed to him again, - you are mine forever, my favorite.

Then, out of nowhere, a red-haired Barsik jumped onto the table, with a plaintive meow went to the bracelet and sniffed it.

- You won't betray me Barsik, right? she asked the four-legged beast.

- Meow-meow, - Barsik promised in turn, licking the bracelet a couple of times, and then Julia's hand.

- Well, that's good, thank you for this, and in return I will spoil you with pieces of goodies.

- Meow, meow, - Barsik purred joyfully.

- What is hidden in gold so magical for people? - Julia continued to wonder, - having decided to delve once again on the Internet, - here, please, how many more expensive metals exist on earth, - she was surprised at the Internet discovery.

- The high vibration frequency of this expensive metal - that's what it turns out - she was delighted with her discovery.

- Therefore, people are so drawn to it, even on a subconscious level, since the scourge of every modern person is the loss of the ability to love, which inevitably leads to a loss in the frequency of vibrations of their mind, body and soul and, as a result, an automatic plant of a chain reaction, expressed in a natural drop in the pH balance in the human body, the launch of all oxidative processes, a decrease, or even a failure, in the work of the organs of internal secretion, and a further fall in immunity. And then, accordingly, oncology is within easy reach, especially considering the external environment in which we live and the products that we take inside.

- Do you understand everything now, Barsik? Julia asked the cat.

"Meow," he answered in turn.

- But this bracelet is dear to me not so much for its high cost, but for its owner, first of all, I hope you understand that?

- Meow, - Barsik mewed in agreement in response.

Julia kissed the bracelet again, and closing eyes, drew him to her heart.

"What a pity that all the good and handsome men in this world have long been busy," a thought flashed through her.

Soon, from the next room came the noise of conversation with the prevailing voice of the mistress of the house.

- It looks like we have guests, Barsik? - she threw the kitten, who in an instant jumped off the table and, finding himself near the closed door to the next room, began meowing plaintively.

Julia quickly hid the bracelet in her purse, which she stuffed deep into the shelf allocated for her things, and having arrived in time to help Barsik, quietly opened the front door.

Barsik instantly jumped out to meet an unexpected guest.

- Here it is, please, - a thought flashed through her, as they say in our proverb, remember the dog and take a stick in your hands.

Immediately she remembered that the guest who unexpectedly visited their house was a "dog" according to the horoscope.

"Son, I've told you more than once that there are no ideal relationships in the world," the mother of her already matured son taught. - And there is only male

power to forgive female weaknesses and, of course, in turn, female wisdom - not to notice male stupidity, and everything else is serials and books written about love.

Julia's heart fluttered.

She continued to stand near the half-open door and, as if hypnotized, listened to the conversation between mother and son.

- So the fact of the matter is that she does not have this feminine wisdom, mother, - her son complained to her mother. - She is like a stupid chicken, without thinking she throws her nonsense, shaking our whole house. Our neighbors treat me with sympathy.

"Yes, but, don't ruin the family now, Kostya, son, at least think about the children, what kind of injury you can inflict on them," the mother taught.

- What kind of children are you talking about, mom, when they are already quite adults.

- Son, you yourself have not been small for a long time, but you still cannot understand for yourself that a wife can never replace your mother, just like a husband can never fully replace a father's wife. Knowledge and acceptance of this axiom will give a person more patience and responsibility. And as for justice in relationships, it is for the Almighty to judge, for he tells us that he will be asked from each person, and each of us will be responsible for everything he has done in life.

He also tells us that he will ask everyone for the answer for the life of each person and teaches us to love each other as He loved us all.

- And then what will people say about us? There will be gossip. You do know people.

- What will people say? Is this more important to you than your son's happiness? Eh, mother, it's easy for you to talk about it, but you try to live with her, only her beauty means little to me, she was completely overshadowed by her nasty character. As soon as she gets hooked on something, she doesn't get off her donkey, and of course, now she has her favorite hobby, this is a golden bracelet, which I lost somewhere and when. She is sure that I gave it to my mistress, but you know very well that I don't have any mistress.

Julia, who continued to stand silently at the open door, felt her heart ache again.

- Although I really need a woman's affection.

Julia's cardiac colic continued until her presence was discovered.

- Oh ... oh, Julia, you also heard the arrival of our guest, unexpected and long-awaited, - Lydia Ivanovna affectionately threw at Julia standing at the door. - Come on, daughter, join our conversation, otherwise it's hard for me to endure male reproaches against women alone.

Julia hesitated a little, and then approached the chatting hosts.

- Hello, dear, how are you? Konstantin greeted her, rising from his chair and hugging her arms.

"Hello, Konstantin," she said embarrassedly, looking away.

"I missed my mother and you so much that you can't even imagine it," he admitted to her.

"We are glad to see you too," said Julia, whose heart was pounding so hard that she only dreamed of slipping away as soon as possible.

Lydia Ivanovna, smiling and silently, watched the meeting of people close to her.

- Daughter, could you make us some coffee, - Lydia Ivanovna hurried to defuse the uncomfortable situation that had created.

"Now, Mom," Julia agreed happily and headed into the kitchen.

Soon Konstantin offered to help her take the coffee to the hallway, where the conversation between mother and son took place.

Julia's heart sank again in anticipation of a sharp turn in her fate.

- So the coffee is ready, - Konstantin drawled, - seeing coffee spilled into two cups on a small tray.

He quickly approached Julia, cowering in discomfort, who was standing near the gas stove with her back to him, and, embracing her from behind, pressed her tightly to his chest.

- Release me, please, - she asked, freeing herself from his captivity with the movements of her hand, - no, what are you doing?

"Hush, or your mother will hear," Konstantin warned her.

"Let him hear," Julia said sternly, turning to face him.

- Why do you resist your feelings, Julia? I do feel everything. Stop this war with yourself, - Konstantin suddenly suggested to her.

"You're talking to me about honesty," Julia continued to press him, - you, destroying your life and the lives of other people?

Whose life have I ruined? Konstantin began to fight back.

- First of all, and mine in addition, - Julia shouted at him and waved her hand at him, but Konstantin managed to intercept her and forced her into his arms.

Embracing the crying and trembling girl, he suddenly heard a strong beating of her heart.

"I love you, my little fool, I love you," he whispered gently in her ear.

Julia was in no hurry to tear her little head from his chest, it seemed to her that she would gladly live the rest of her life in his strong and reliable arms.

"It's impossible, Konstantin," she whispered to him in a barely audible voice.

- What exactly? he asked.

"It's madness and it's a sin, don't you understand?"

Konstantin for the first time heard from her an appeal to you for the entire time of their acquaintance.

"Of course, I understand, my golden one," Konstantin agreed with her and began to gently kiss her teary brown eyes, and then kissed her on the lips.

“Enough, enough,” she said, pushing him away, “we must put an end to this, what happened, what happened, we will forget, I beg you.

- Well, as you say, but first you will return my bracelet to me, - Konstantin agreed with her.

- What bracelet? How can he know that I have him? She rolled her eyes at him in dismay.

- The one that you lost that night on your mother's name day, - Konstantin looked intently into her eyes, - and which you probably found and hid at home.

“I didn't find any bracelet,” Julia retorted in a trembling voice, “and if I found it, I would immediately return it to you,” she hastened to turn her back to him again, looking away.

Konstantin again hugged her from behind, holding some red material in his fist.

“Let me go,” Julia tried to free herself by force. - What is it? she asked, noticing the red matter.

He slowly opened his fist, applied the material to his face and, as if inhaling the scent of a bouquet of roses, began to observe with animal interest the dilated pupils of Julia's eyes.

- Haa, - Julia drawled in horror, - what is it, how dare you, where did you get it from? Now give them to me, you hear, shameless scoundrel, - Julia attacked him with her small fists, trying to wrest her underwear from him.

“I hope you recognize your underwear,” he impudently waved his thong in front of her eyes.

“Pervert, give me back my underwear right now,” Julia threatened, continuing to attack him, “and stop blackmailing me, otherwise I will report you to the police.”

“Only in exchange for my bracelet, thief,” Konstantin chuckled maliciously, “you stole my heart and my soul, but aren't they more expensive than your underwear? Already the police will understand everything thoroughly, I can assure you of this.

Konstantin hurried out of the kitchen, stuffed her underwear into his pocket and went to the living room, where his mother, tired of waiting for coffee, was waiting for him.

Julia hurried after him, but the presence of her mother quickly cooled her ardor.

- Shh, - he turned his eyes to Julia, - I hope we both know how to keep our secrets, yes, Julia? In any case, for me this is a more than equivalent exchange, to which I agree with pleasure.

Julia, having swallowed her tongue, stood in a complete stupor, as if bewitched, and did not even know what to say to him in response.

What secret are you talking about, son? Lidia Ivanovna asked, instilling even greater horror in Julia.

“Nothing special and significant, mom,” Konstantin hastened to reassure her, “it’s just that against the background of nervous shocks, my wife and I had increased headaches and pressure, and the doctor strictly forbade drinking alcohol and coffee, and I hope that you will keep in secret this my secret?”

Julia breathed a sigh of relief.

Soon Konstantin left, leaving two women who loved him, scaring both of them almost to death, one with the news of shaky health, and the second with the fear of divulging secrets.

- Okay, daughter, since Kostya refused coffee, bring it to us, after all, goodness does not disappear, - suggested Lidia Ivanovna.

“You also have pressure, Mom, and the doctor forbade you to drink coffee,” Julia hastened to remind.

- Nothing, daughter, once you can, otherwise I got nervous about my son. He is unhappy with me and painfully unlucky in love, which only this vixen wife of his does not do with him.

Julia hastened to comply with the request of her mistress.

Over a cup of coffee, the two women talked to each other for a long time, sharing secrets from their past lives.

Julia had a very restless night. Thoughts about the further development of events relating to relations with Konstantin, an avalanche cascade leaned on her, not giving her the opportunity to fall asleep for a long time.

- What if his wife finds my underwear from him? What a wretch he is. How does he know that I have his bracelet, or is he just pretending and playing? What shame and horror will be if they find out about everything. Not only will I lose my job, how will I look Thea in the eye,

....

A wave of negative thoughts deprived her of sleep, but Barsik turned up in time, removing all her worries and fears for a while.

PART FIVE

XXVII

In the second half of the summer, mass protests by citizens of many European countries against the restrictions imposed by their governments led to some concessions, including in the country where the Wano family lived.

From the very morning, a certain revival of the rhythm of life was felt in different parts of the capital city.

- Vano, find Beno and take out a few more sheds on the terrace, - the commanding voice of the authorities was heard.

- All right, Mr. Lazio, - Vano minted in response, who, after a short search, found his old fellow countryman in a secluded place with Aldona.

- Guys, what are you doing here? Lazio is looking for you.

- Beno amuses me with his comic stories and anecdotes, - explained Aldona.

- Now is not the time, follow me, our director has a task for us.

Soon, Vano and Beno, on the orders of Lazio, set about installing additional awnings on the terrace in front of the entrance to the elite cafe.

- Gretta, Carol. And you take care of the tables, - demanded Lazio.

Life gradually began to boil in this small restaurant, which was preparing for a new life in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

Tables were placed at the required social distance from each other. In front of the entrance, panels of desobarriers were installed, and on a small table, the equipment necessary for thermal screening was antibacterial liquid for hands, table surfaces and door handles.

Vano was taken aback for a moment, plunging into the memories of the recently spent night with Agneta, when he, lying in bed waiting for her, suddenly saw her for the first time in an unusual form with a small tray in her hands.

- What is this masquerade, wolf cub? he asked her.

- And these are new fantasies of our intimate life. What don't you like?

Vano could not come to his senses for a long time, looking at his beloved woman in such a strange dress. A white bathrobe draped over her shoulders revealed her intimate parts.

Standing in front of him in light blue rubber boots, she held a small tray with one hand, from which she took rubber gloves and other rubber products.

- Wolf cub, are you out of your mind? Vano was surprised.

Why, isn't that romantic? she giggled, sitting down next to him on the edge of the bed.

"Let's try this, please," she pleaded.

Agneta rubbed Vano's body with a piece of cotton soaked in alcohol tincture. Head protection was guaranteed by rubber caps for swimming.

Agneta methodically covered the intriguing parts of the body of her beloved man with rubber and fabric covers, she even did not forget to put goggles for swimmers on his eyes.

- You'd better get spacesuits for us, - Vano joked.

“Great idea, I’ll have to try this one too, but next time.”

The preparations for the prelude continued for some time, until Agnetha’s fantasies came to an end, after which they lay next to each other almost completely covered with all sorts of protective equipment.

- So, what is next? Vano asked after a pause.

- Now that we are as protected as possible from coronavirus and sexually transmitted diseases, you can start.

- What to start, wolf cub? - Vano asked through the mask.

- All your dirty deeds, you can now start fearlessly - Agnetha giggled.

- First you try to use your signature number - bite me in a mask, - Vano suggested to her.

Agneta rolled over him with her whole body and began to bite him.

- Well, do you like it? - Vano asked her.

Agnetha giggled in response.

- All the same, you will not be able to tame my friend by any means.

- Oh really? Prove it, - suggested Agnetha.

After a short struggle, they fell to the floor, and Vano at a frantic pace began to rip off all the protective equipment from her and himself, it seemed, from all the troubles in the world.

- You have not heard yet that love is the greatest protection of a person from all his misfortunes in the world.

Agnetha suddenly burst into hysterical laughter.

- Well, where will we continue our fight? - he asked her, hard squeezing her body.

- Crazy, let's better continue this on the bed, otherwise you can break through the floor, and both of us will fall on the heads of the neighbors from the bottom floor with you, and they may not like it very much, and then we will definitely not be happy.

Agneta's sonorous laughter soon began to transform into a different timbre.

Cooling down a little and tempering his ardor, Vano suddenly remembered one cool episode from his school life.

- Tell me, - she started up, - it's so cool to listen to such stories.

- Well, listen then, - began Vano, - in our class there was a whore who in the last class went to a prostitute.

- How interesting.

“So, whenever he visited her, she rewarded him with a relatively mild urological disease, but after completing the full course of treatment, he returned to her again.

- Stupid, what, there were few girls in your class? Agneta was surprised.

- The bottom line is, then we all rushed into battle, intoxicated by hormonal attacks, but this case with our unfortunate womanizer was very frightening and alarmed all the boys in the class.

- And finally, the second classmate in o

One fine day, he decided to dispel our fears and announced that he could give a lecture to everyone on how to protect himself and protect himself during sex with any prostitute, even if she is infected with something. He even drew tickets and started selling them to classmates.

- How cool, - Agneta clapped her hands, - what's next?

- Taking advantage of the absence of one of the lessons due to the illness of one of the teachers, we persuaded him to take this opportunity, and so he pulled this story for forty-five minutes and told it very slowly and tediously. I will try to convey the essence of his lesson in just a couple of minutes. Before you have sex with such a woman, you need to use a condom - he began, then took out a bag of elastic and opened it.

"Then," he continued, "you put a dense layer of cotton wool on the head of this rubber band and put on the second layer of this rubber band.

- You must do this several times. And then in no case should you come into contact with such women, only in this case I guarantee you absolute safety.

The bell rang for recess, he ran out of the classroom, and all of us, deceived classmates, furiously ran after him.

"Cool," Agneta concluded, laughing.

- Vano, wake up, what's the matter with you, - he felt a push in the shoulder from Lazio, - the goods have been brought, help unload.

- Idiot, what are you doing? - stopped Vano Beno, who poured abundantly the spongy mass of the deso-barrier with antibacterial liquid for hands, - this is for the hands, but for the deso-barrier and for surfaces a completely different liquid.

- Who cares? - Beno reacted, - they thought up all sorts of tricks with this crown, it's easier to let them drink our chacha more often and more, so they will be protected.

- Run to the warehouse and grab rubber gloves at the same time, Lazio ordered the van to be unloaded, - Vano pointed with a glance towards the cargo light tower parked in front of the entrance to their cafe.

"Now," Beno agreed dutifully, hurrying on with his new task.

Soon, the establishment, where old acquaintances were swarming, Vano's father also appeared.

- Well, son, how do you work here? he asked.

- Everything is fine, but you don't have to visit me so often, like a little one, - asked Vano.

- But I'm not with you, I'm with Lazio, I have business with him, you know?

- Oh, who do I see, - exclaimed Lazio, getting up from his chair, greeted Father Vano, who entered his office.

"Hello, my dear," the old friends greeted with their fists.

- Thank you very much, Lazio.

- For what?

- For my son.

- Leave, for God's sake, thank our government for giving relief, at least we move a little, otherwise it was completely stagnant.

Their conversation was interrupted by Lazio's friends Bobby and Bill entering the office.

- Well, that's the whole team in the collection, - Lazio noticed with a smile, meeting the guests.

- David, my friends and I decided to open branches on all fourteen islands of our city, do you think it's a good idea?

"Great," said David.

- But there are still three of us, and the three of us will not be so easy to manage this entire empire, so it's possible that there will be work for you, but how do you look at it David.

David swallowed his tongue for a moment with joy.

- Of course, I would love to, but I have no experience in this matter, - as if he tried to justify himself.

"It's okay, David, we'll help," Bobby confirmed.

- We will teach and help, - Bill agreed.

- In return, you will enrich our cuisine with dishes of your national cuisine, right? Lazio suggested.

David felt a great surge of joy.

- Thank you very much, friends, - David thanked with watery eyes.

- And then, you see, we will open our branches in your homeland, - continued Lazio.

- We will grow, of course, - agreed Bill.

"There's enough work for everyone, as long as the crown doesn't mess with our plans," Bobby said.

"We will cope with the crown," Lazio assured, "with or without it, but you won't forbid a person to eat and drink, it's another matter that the salary of our employees depends on the number of visitors, and so far it's far from normal, but we'll make up for it," he reassured Lazio.

- Wolf cub, hello, what are you doing here? Vano greeted in surprise.

- Here, I ran to visit you for coffee, I hope you will treat me?

- Yes, of course, sit down, wherever you want, - Vano offered in confusion.

- Better closer to the sun, - answered Agneta smiling, sitting down at the only table with a canopy.

“Don’t introduce us to your wolf cub,” Gretta and Aldon, restless and indomitable from curiosity, pleaded.

- Yes, of course, - Vano replied, glancing in her direction, - although Carol will do it better than me, since she is her friend, - Vano's voice trembled with confusion.

The women who bothered Vano hurried to meet a new acquaintance.

- Well, hello, wolf cub, - they greeted the guest.

- Hello, - Agnetha answered in surprise.

- Do not be surprised, we already know each other in absentia, Vano buzzed everyone's ears, he only talks about you.

Agneta cringed in embarrassment, it was even evident that she blushed a little.

- Meet my friend, these are my friends Gretta and Aldona, - say Carol Hall.

The quickly started conversation ended just as quickly, Vano managed to see Agneta a short distance away.

- What are you telling them about me, Vano?

- Nothing special.

“Then how do they know about my nickname?”

- Calm down, wolf cub, they only know that you are my friend, translator and lawyer in my emigration cases, - Vano reassured Agneta.

- Look, Vano, don't spoil our relationship.

What are you, Agnetha? Why should I spoil them, you know that I have no one closer than you.

If I had known, I wouldn't have come here.

- Wolf cub, calm down, you are my friend and lawyer, and they don't know anything else.

- Are you sure? Turn around and watch them whisper.

- Well, let it be, you won't forbid gossip, right?

- I don't need rumors and gossip, Vano, you understand? Many people know me in this city, and rumors spread much faster than any epidemic.

- Calm down, baby, everything is fine.

- I didn't ask you to tell everyone about me. - Agneta hurried to leave Vano alone.

“Wait, well, where are you going, don't leave like that, Agneta,” Vano pleaded after her.

Agnetha finished him off with her statement:

“I came to you with important information, but you ruined everything.” With these words, she disappeared from Vano's field of vision.

Soon the cafe began to receive its first visitors. Toward the end of the working day, two men Vano knew entered.

- Fathers, what kind of people, - Vano exclaimed with joy, - all the same inseparable friends Eric and Hans.

- Hello, Vano, - old acquaintances clashed with their fists, - by what fate, what are you doing here? Eric asked.

- And I work here, - Vano explained, seating the newly arrived visitors at the table.

“Very well,” said Hans.

- And not only me, but also our mutual friend Beno, - Vano explained.

“Oh, oh, but not him,” Hans pleaded, “that’s why I don’t really want to see him.

- It's enough for you, Hans, - Eric tried to reconcile them, - what happened, it happened, forget it, everything happens in life.

- Wow - everything, because of him we all then lost our jobs and vegetated for a long time without it, - Hans reminded.

- But thanks to this case, we found a better job - explained Eric.

- Where is it? Wano asked.

- In one of the ports.

- Wow, wonderful, - Vano rapped out.

- Uncle Hans helped us with this.

- Perfect, well, how are things at your new job? Wano asked.

- How, how, we tell you - fine, - Hans repeated in a serious tone.

- Here you have, for example, what is the salary here? Eric asked.

Vano replied after thinking a little.

- So, we have almost two or three times more, - Eric explained.

- It's great, and this would not hurt me, otherwise I recently sent all my hard-earned pennies to my wife at home and now I'm sucking my paw, - Vano complained.

- Come to us, - suggested Eric, - we will work together again.

“Only without Beno,” Hans pleaded.

- Well, I'll think about it, - Vano promised.

- Here's my business card, - Eric handed it out, - and if you decide - call, just keep in mind that there is a very large demand, and you may not be able to find a job right away. Besides, Uncle Hans has to like you so that he can plead for you.

- Thank you, Eric.

- Okay, hare rant, I already want to eat, - Hans roared, - in the morning I've been holding on to one coffee and a sandwich.

- Yes, yes, of course, now I will bring the menu and take the order.

- Beno, come to us, as soon as you are free, - Vano called out to his employee who was running on orders. - Look at our guests.

- Wa, - Beno was surprised, - what fates?

Erik willingly greeted Beno with his fists, but Hans looked away from him.

- It's enough for you, Hans, - Eric asked him.

“Hans, I'm sorry about the last incident,” Beno said bashfully, “I'm very sorry, really.

- All right, stop talking, finally bring me something to eat, - Hans growled again.
“Now,” Beno happily agreed and asked Vano to give him the opportunity to serve them, in order to at least partially smooth over the unpleasant incident that had happened between them in the past.

Vano again plunged into his unpleasant sensations, in connection with an unpleasant conversation with Agneta.

He was still perplexed why he had been rejected by his beloved woman, and only now remembered the wise thought he once read that the most sensitive human feeling on earth is the love of a woman, even one wrong word, and even more so an action, and everything goes to hell.

“What sensitive and at the same time cruel creatures they are,” a thought flashed through his mind.

It is so easy and in an instant to give up such a deep attitude and feelings, only they are capable of this. With no other woman with whom he dealt did he experience such feelings and disappointments as from the renunciation of her by Agnes.

- I congratulate you, Ivan, - he heard an inner voice, - you are in trouble, because this is true love.

Unlike other women, whose separations brought a sense of release from the burden, but the case of Agnes was quite different.

He was temporarily distracted from his feelings by the farewell of Eric and Hans. At the same time, the latter looked clearly improved, apparently, proportionally filled with to my stomach.

- Thank you for the hospitality and the meal, - thanked Hans Vano and Beno.

- There will be time, drop by our port, see how we work and live there.

- With great pleasure, he shook hands with his old acquaintances Beno.

In the evening, more than once, Vano tried to call Agneta, but after her last voice answer, “Don’t call me again Vano, you ruined everything,” she didn’t pick up the phone anymore and didn’t even answer his SMS, in which Vano begged to listen to her his.

“Yes, you went to such and such a mother, you don’t want to communicate with me, and you don’t need to,” he wanted to react as in cases with other women, but the stoppers of the fibers of his soul literally nailed this phrase on the fly.

- What’s wrong with him today? - the father asked Vano’s mother, who, wrinkling her chin, barely audibly blurted out, - it’s from a lava.

- Love, love, - the father was indignant, he already has his own love in his homeland and let him experience these feelings with her.

- So after all, in this he is all in you, - reminded the mother.

“And thank God it’s not in you,” my father quipped.

Vano retired to his room, not wanting to be a witness to a verbal skirmish that arose almost from scratch between his parents, who love to blame each other for all troubles and failures.

XXVIII

The ongoing renovations in the company building greatly annoyed the cleaners working in it.

The next meeting of cleaners, arranged by the administrator of the company, was marked for them by considerable innovations.

“We are not working well, girls,” the administrator announced with displeasure, standing on his feet in front of the cleaning ladies sitting at the table in the meeting room, who exchanged glances with each other in bewilderment. - Yes, yes, there are complaints against you from the employees of the company.

- And more specifically? one of them asked.

- What's the difference ... in general, so, I decided that from now on in every toilet there will be a report card with the obligatory hourly signature of each of you after cleaning, otherwise you work from morning until noon, and then everyone scatters home. Will not work.

Quiet objections were heard, which were muffled by the subsequent pleasant information for the cleaners.

- And we will add fifty lari to you for this. Plus, in connection with the current pandemic, we will issue you a new uniform and new means of protection against coronavirus, as you know that this infection has already entered our office and several people have been forced to quarantine, sit at home and work remotely.

- Batono Bezhan, - objected one of the cleaners, - the never-ending repairs are an additional burden on our shoulders.

- All additional work will be paid in bonuses at the end of the month. Please note that I will personally and very strictly check the quality of work and signatures in the timesheets, the guilty will be fired, understand?

“Yes,” the cleaners cringed in response.

- Well then, listen now from the invited epidemiologists about measures to prevent infection and the spread of coronavirus among our employees.

Bejan introduced to the audience two women, in white coats and thin rubber gloves, tucked into their special medical diplomats with a red cross.

After that, he hurriedly left the meeting room and went to his office, where an electrician was already waiting for him, returning from the building materials market with a three-core copper electrical cable.

- Enver, did you buy everything I ordered you through Dali?

- Yes, batono Bezhan.

- Great, then let's go see what they are doing with the reconstructed rooms. Take Merab and Lasha with us and take a ten-meter tape measure.

From one of the last rooms of the lower floor, the sounds of dismantling the interior partition could be heard.

- It is better to carry out such work on non-working days, so as not to create inconvenience for the company's employees, - the administrator thought.

- Well, how are you, Dilar? he asked the foreman.
- And how can they be, batono Bezhan, when at every step you come across such old imperfections that only their correction takes a lot of time.
- What this time?
- And here, look for yourself, my guys unfastened the baseboards, and one turned out to be nailed to a pipe suitable for a radiator.
- You can go crazy, - Bezhan agreed, - I thought that such construction and installation crimes are happening only today, but it turns out ...
- No, they have always been, are and will be in the future. People don't change, but over time they get worse and worse.
- “So, we'll leak in the winter, Dilar, if we don't fix this gap?”
- Well, of course, batono Bezhan, but what can we do with such a hole.
- So, Merab, come up to us and tell Dali to urgently call here.
- Good, - the administrator's employee rapped out, hastening to carry out the order of his boss.
- Envery, you know your business, just in case, also take measurements to calculate the length of electrical cables and all the necessary electrical equipment, and do not forget about Internet cables.

Pretty tired from the hectic working day, Bezhan returned home later than usual.

Before he had had time to really have dinner, as family problems captured him completely.

- Bezhan, talk to your children, otherwise they are more and more locked in themselves and moving away from us.
- Very good, Lela, so they grow up, let them study and get used to an independent life, let them solve their problems themselves, and if they need us, they themselves will turn to us.
- Yes, hope so, and then expect surprises from them.
- So you spend more time with them than I do, Lela, so take care of them.
- Take care of the house, housework, work, how much I can do, and then I myself did not notice when I missed the threads of influence.
- If your work bothers you so much, then you can leave it, I have told you about it more than once, somehow I will be able to support you.
- I live my work, Bezhan, how can you not understand this.
- And we, how are we?
- Are you deprived of my attention? You do a lot for the family, but this is also not enough.
- Not enough, but what else do you expect from me.
- Attention, Bezhan, more attention, if not to me, then at least to the children.
- All right, all right, just don't start it up again now, for God's sake, otherwise you'll be leaving for a whole week later, I'll talk to them, I'll talk, calm down.

- Oh, pa, hello, how are you, - the eighteen-year-old daughter hastened to say hello in time to the beginning of the quarrel of the spouses.

- Thank you, Natia, and how are you, - the father and daughter exchanged kisses on the cheek, as if forgetting about the measures antivirus safety precautions.

- Everything is OK with me, pa, I closed the session successfully, albeit remotely, they noted this business with my girlfriends. Recently I had a very successful shopping, so everything is normal for me.

"Well, that's good, my smart girl," the father praised his daughter. - Well, you know, my dear, if anything, I'm there.

- Of course, pa, and who else do I have besides you?

- Like who, after all, you have a fan on the horizon, won't you introduce us to him?

Natia looked inquiringly at her mother, as if trying to find out from her the reason for betraying her secret to her father ahead of time, but then deftly retorted.

- Ah, well, it's so, nothing serious yet, when the time comes, you'll find out everything, but for now ...

- All right, daughter, I left an envelope with a letter in your room, please read it.

- Thank you very much, - the daughter shone like a sun, knowing full well about the contents of the envelope, - you spoil me so much that sometimes it is difficult for me to resist my Wishlist. Ma, we have something to eat, otherwise I'm hungry all over the world in the morning.

- Go, put yourself in order and at the table, your father just finished dinner.

"After that, do we have anything left to eat?"

- Natia, - Lela's daughter stopped her warningly.

- I joked lovingly, dad understands me perfectly, doesn't it, pa?

The daughter ran up to her father and hung on him.

Bezhan has never experienced anything even close to this feeling of bliss in his life.

The hugs of father and daughter are the sweetest, the most tender, the most, the most, the most, ..., relieving any physical and mental pain.

At that moment, he acutely felt that she was much more necessary and important to him in life than he was to her. He hastily turned his head away from her in order to hide from her those who had not seen tears for a long time.

Soon, the eldest son of Bezhan, Sandro, who entered the house, joined the family union, with whom his father had a conversation later.

- Son, don't kill yourself because of her, there won't be her - there will be another, you're still a young, handsome, wealthy man, she should fight for you, not you for her.

- I love her.

- So what, you think, try to stop loving her at least a little, so that she reaches out to you more.

The answer was a doomed smile from his son.

- You're still young and not quite aware of women's whims, you ask me about them.

- No, I beg you, it's not easy for me even without your advice.

- Do not overwhelm the balance of your importance in front of her, you are everything to her, and she ... She broke your car, okay, and now life is breaking, don't you understand this, she keeps you on a leash, they say, where will he go, but she herself thinks, I suppose, who will get it, so as not to miscalculate. Yes, you can finally remove this woman's firmware in yourself. Your mother is to blame for everything, she raised you wrong all your life.

"Again, mother, just a little, so mother," Lela raised her voice, eavesdropping on the conversation between father and son with the corner of her ear. - Although I brought up incorrectly, but you didn't bring up at all, or do you think that you will get off with your money?

- Don't eavesdrop on our conversation.

- Money may decide a lot in life, but not everything. But it's hard for you to understand.

- Leave us alone, let me talk to my son, and you better mind your own business in the kitchen.

"Then don't teach your son all sorts of nonsense." Otherwise, you will leave him alone in life. It's better to tell him that you need to fight for love to the end, forgot, perhaps, yourself, that you just didn't get up for me in order to achieve my goal. Where is your love now, or do you think that once in a lifetime is enough?

- Yes, of course, but what if I keep a fire lit by constantly throwing firewood into it, so as not to let it go out.

- Again you're talking about money, Bezhan, you still don't understand anything.

- Get away from us Lela. Let me talk to my son. Sandro, what can I teach you when today the best teacher for each of us is the Internet, in which you sit with your sisters, I'm sure, for days.

- And I thought it was God, father.

- Of course, God, first of all, and then wasn't the Internet created with his permission? So, it has a million different men's clubs and advice for men on how to behave with women.

- Personally, you need a wife in the kitchen and as a housekeeper. Lela continued at a distance.

Sandro seemed to be tempting his father and did not want to heed his advice.

- Judge for yourself, any thing that we purchase has instructions for use without reading it, and we cannot use it successfully. And the most important ABC

of relations with women is the book by Oleg Novoselov called "Woman, a textbook for men", you are familiar with it.

Sandro looked at his father in amazement.

- One thing that is written and said is possible more than once, and another when this attack falls on you, as if you don't know, - father.

Is it much easier to teach others than to deal with it yourself?

- And that's true, son, but still we must try.

- Okay, forgive me, I'm very tired today, I'll probably go to my place to rest.

- Okay, but you know, if anything, I'm always there for you.

A comforting smile flickered across his son's face.

- Yes, and also, I left you a note in an envelope in your room, read it later.

- Good, pa, thank you.

- When will you take the things that I asked to my sister Lali? - Lela distracted him.

- Yes, even now, my dear, - Bezhan agreed with joy, ready to escape to hell from his wife's swotting.

Soon he was met by an outwardly absolute copy of his wife, her twin sister Lali.

"She doesn't love me at all," he complained.

- Do not talk nonsense, Bezhan, it only seems to you.

- Don't, Lali, I beg you, don't calm me down, because I understand everything perfectly.

- She tells me something completely different about you and praises you very much for your concern for the family.

- That's right, for the work and only in a consumer context. I will never forgive myself for my biggest and fatal mistake, which ruined both of us, - Bezhan put his hand on Lali's hand.

She silently withdrew her hand.

- Do not torment yourself, Bezhan, you are not to blame for anything, it just happened, even our parents could not distinguish us for a long time, and then I had to choose between mind and soul, enterprise and romance, that is, between my sister and me. Your natural self-preservation instinct worked, and you made the right choice for yourself at the natural level.

- No Lali, no, the more time passes, the more I am convinced that I loved only you in my life.

- Leave it Bejan, all this is in the past, and now it does not matter.

- None? Here, listen to his answer on this matter, - he took Lali's hand and put it to his heart.

"Stop it," Lali retorted sternly, taking her hand from him.

"But there was a certain difference between you, why did you hide it from me at one time, even now tell me about it.

Lali smiled back.

- Only my parents knew about it, by nature, and my mother by a mole.
- By birthmark? Where, where is she, show me why I never knew about her.
- And you couldn't know, - Lali continued to smile.
- Show me, I beg you, otherwise I will not leave here.
- There! - Lali dropped heavily, standing facing the window and with her back to him.

He grabbed her by the shoulders and pulled her to face him.

"Don't, Bezhan, I beg you, we won't add a second one to our fatal mistake, otherwise we'll never forgive ourselves for this later, she's my sister, and that says it all," cut off Lali, hastily freeing herself from her embrace.

Spreading female breasts stubbornly leaned on the male bare chest.

- Do you like my baby elephant?

In response, there was a conciliatory wink of the eyes.

Why are you so sad today? asked a woman's voice, running the finger of her right hand over the man's face. - You had a fight with your wife, and she kicked you out of the house?

In response, only a silent smile.

Or did he leave his wife? And here, for example, all my life I dreamed of meeting a man like you.

- Well, that's how you met?

- I didn't want to.

- But as?

- I did not want to share it with anyone, it should belong entirely to me.

- Hmm, what a nimble one, - a male voice sighed, - I forgot how one song sings about how and where the world is arranged so that it would satisfy us completely.

Again, the image of an ideal woman flashed through her mind, who gathered in her thoughts bit by bit, from the women she had met.

Reluctantly and resentfully, the naked female body rose from the male chest and headed naked towards the bathroom.

- Where are you, baby elephant?

- I'm going to take a shower.

- I would have thrown at least a bathrobe, or you might catch a cold.

- Nothing, I'm fast.

- Now, if you combine something from her, something from other women, the only way it would be possible, probably, to create an ideal woman both in character and in physical indicators, a woman on whom it was not a pity to spend her whole life, - Thoughts swirled in the man's head.

- Lali, what is he doing with you so far, it would be interesting to know? came a woman's voice on the phone.

- Are you Lela, what should he do with me in the middle of the night, are you out of your mind?

- Where is he then?
 - How should I know, he left me a long time ago.
 - Interesting. I just thought that maybe he asked to stay with you, since we had a little fight with him.
 - Yes, I noticed it in his mood.
 - He didn't tell you anything about it?
 - No, but what?
 - Simply, he thinks that with his money he can solve all his family problems, but you know that this is far from being the case.
 "Of course I do, sister.
 We haven't had anything in bed for a long time.
 - I know.
 - From where, then he told you something about me, and you hide it.
 - No, he didn't say anything.
 - Whereas?
 - How, how, you got it right, have you forgotten that we are twins, and physically I experience absolutely everything the same as you.
 - Even then? the voice wondered.
 - Imagine this. What even and that, - the answer followed.
 - Horrible! Why don't I feel anything like that? And you are still alone and never with anyone?
 There was a pause.
 - Oh, forgive me, dear, forgive me for what I'm talking about, I don't know myself, so why are you passing Lali like that, there are so many worthy men spinning around you.
 - Let's postpone this conversation, and it's already late, I want to sleep.
 - Well, just when I don't know where he is, I'm worried and I can't sleep.
 - Don't worry, sister, nothing will happen to him.
 Xia, he will return to you safe and sound, believe me.
 - How do you know?
 - I know, leave me alone, I want to sleep, Lela.
 I'm afraid you're hiding something from me.
 - Oh, come on, - Lali hung up and, turning on the other side, continued her disturbed dream.

XXIX

It is well known that the quality of a person's life is evaluated not by vain, passing days without a trace, but by those that leave an indelible mark and memory on us for many years.

Scientists have determined that during a life a person is truly happy for only two or three hours, which, of course, one could argue with.

Every living and non-living matter has its own habitat. For fish, for example, it is water, for animals it is a forest, for a person it is the land on which he was born and raised, which feeds him and pleases him with its fruits.

He who does not work does not eat when it was already said, but it was also said that he who does not know how to rest does not know how to work either.

These two inseparable statements from ancient times were inseparable companions of a happy life of a person, without the existence of at least one of them, his life turned into a walk in the circles of hell.

And is a good rest after hard working days really possible without spending it with close friends at a wonderful table?

- Lord, how much our toastmaster loves to talk, - an appraisal female phrase was heard.

- Misha, can't you make it shorter?

There was a prolonged sound from the impact of metal cutlery on glassware.

- Hush, friends, we are all listening to the toastmaster.

- Our table, gentlemen, - continued the toastmaster, satisfied with the support, - in its content, as you know, it is very multicolored and, most importantly, informative. No wonder foreigners call it an academy. There has not been a stage in the history of our country where peace would not be a desirable dream for us. It has been so since ancient times and, unfortunately, it continues to this day, but despite this, such a life could not take away our thirst for life and love for each other. And, of course, any bad peace is better than any war. For peace, friendship and love friends.

- Thank God, one long toast was passed by the toastmaster, - a woman's voice was heard again, which was soon replaced by the shrill crowing of a rooster.

And after a long ringing of the alarm clock, the toastmaster became seriously angry, who, having found the bell ringer, threw him to the floor.

- Misha, stop sleeping, I ask you, how much can we do, did we come here to sleep or do business? After all, we arrived for a couple of days, but how many things do we still need to do?

Tamada hardly opened his eyes, seeing a familiar woman in an unfamiliar attire standing above his head.

"Wait a little longer, let me finish my toast," the toastmaster pleaded and turned over to the other side, hoping to continue his reign at an exquisite table in the circle of acquaintances and friends.

- Aai, there is no sense in butting with you, - he heard the same familiar female voice in the back.

- Thank God, - a thought flashed through the sleeping consciousness, - they fell behind, surprisingly quickly, well, very commendable.

The joy of release was interrupted by the continuous ringing of his mobile phone, which almost suffered the fate of an alarm clock.

"Yes, I'm listening to you," the toastmaster responded reluctantly.

- Mikhail, hello, I'm calling you from the city office security service, you are on duty today, - a female voice was heard, a young signalman of the service.

- What's the point? Michael muttered angrily.

- What? Can't hear, repeat.

- No, today it's not me, but my shift, Alexander is on duty, but what happened?

- The alarm went off, but there was no warning call from you before. Okay, we'll call him back then.

- Do me a favor, please, - Mikhail cut off the connection.

You can go crazy. There is no peace either day or night, neither here, in the village, nor there, in the city, but what a feast I was torn off, bastards, - Mikhail continued to be indignant. - And they say that happiness comes in a dream. All this nonsense, as it comes and goes, only saliva from missed happiness begins to flow at the end. Last time, I was torn off in a dream from a young beauty, at the right time, and now from such a feast. In a dream, as in life, not always and not all things can be completed to the end.

Suddenly, a telephone trill of an SMS message was heard.

- Who else needs it? Mikhail asked, turning on his obsolete push-button mobile phone. "Well, let's see now," he muttered under his breath. So, so, so, well, of course, first of all, reminder messages about non-payment of utility bills, - he was indignant, - after all, write yourself that I have another two weeks, but why do you remind me of this every day?

Further, more, advice to purchase a cryptocurrency that is growing in price every day.

- Would you tell me what chishi? Michael reacted angrily. - What do we have next? ABOUT! Here is the message, I understand!

- Space landing on Jetex ships continues. Buy jetex tickets, spin its wheel of luck and win up to ten thousand lari each time. Cool, don't say anything.

What do we have next? A message from Europa plus - place your bets on European football matches and win money easily. Yes, of course.

And here is a message about the purchase of a new apartment in a prestigious area of the capital with an environmentally friendly infrastructure and without a preliminary three-month fee. Yeah, of course, first take it, and then in

Get it in the neck all your life - the game is not bad for fiction.

So what's next for us? And, of course, the call to borrow from a financial company with an effective thirty-six percent with any credit history. Yes, of course, tomorrow I will make you happy, - Mikhail continued mumbling to himself.

And this is what I need now! he exclaimed with joy. - Let's see now, under what conditions. Tortini! Super! Order your favorite cake for every taste with home delivery.

"Misha, stop lying in bed and philosophizing," the woman who entered the room pleaded, "it's almost noon, and you're still in bed."

- I read SMS messages, you don't see Mac, or what? What if we miss something important? Mikhail continued to lick his lips from time to time.

- Well, what did you read there for yourself important?

- Tortini offers our favorite cake with home delivery, can you imagine?

- Wow, - you have one thing on your mind, where and what would be tastier to eat, fill your already inflated belly.

- Well, why not? When I work hard for the family from dawn to dusk, then you don't mind, but how do you grab some yummy, so immediately belly? And then, not belly, but authority, - Michael proudly objected. - Is it in the Soviet way?

- Wake up, Misha, and finally forget about your beloved country of the Soviets, and about everything Soviet, which has long sunk into the past. You don't see, what time has come for us - wild capitalism, and if you don't spin and work from morning to night, then you can completely disappear and at the same time destroy your family.

- Why don't the capitalists eat cakes for tea?

- Aaah, - arguing with you is like throwing peas against the wall.

- Mom, we also want a delicious cake, - Gvantsa and Vakho, who arrived in time to help, supported their father.

- All right, all right, parasites, they all yelled with one voice, - Maka tried to retort, - let dad bring me the necessary products from the market, I will bake you such a cake that Tortini's company will never dream of.

- Hooray! - exclaimed with joy the homemade cake-eaters, in one voice.

- Glory, glory to the royal appetite, - Mikhail exclaimed joyfully, quickly getting out of bed, not bothering to finish reading half a dozen more SMS messages.

- Truly, each catcher has its own bait, - Maka thought, - how else could I get my husband out of bed so quickly?

On a joint trip to the market and the nearest supermarket, in anticipation of tasting the extra-original cake promised by their mother, the children agreed with their father.

If in the market Mikhail's attention was directed to the grocery stores, then the children's eyes ran around and covered much more space with their gaze.

- How few people are in the market today, - Gvantsa was surprised.

- This is because everything has risen in price, - Vakhtang tried to explain, - and people have no money, and therefore everyone is content with the gifts of rural nature, isn't it, dad?

- Yes, yes, but we must fulfill our plan according to the mother's list anyway.

- But for this it is enough to go to the supermarket? Waho asked.

- Yes, but what you can buy in the market, it is better not to take it in the supermarket, - Mikhail assured.

- Why so? the son asked.

- Because the products on the market are more environmentally friendly, - explained Gvantsa.

What does "environmentally friendly" mean? Waho repeated.

- Let's go there, - Gvantsa dragged her brother towards the counter, behind which an elderly man was selling small rabbits of different colors, - look how wonderful they are.

As soon as he had time to buy everything he needed, Mikhail began to look for his children, looking around the small area of the market.

The tearful children approached him from behind the wall of one of the outbuildings and begged their father to take them away from the market as soon as possible.

- What happened, Gvantsa? Michael asked in astonishment.

"Look, what a horror, dad, take us out of here as soon as possible," the children asked, pointing to a middle-aged man rolling a three-wheeled market cart. Severed heads of cows with open eyes were displayed on it.

- What a horror that you allow yourself? - Mikhail involuntarily shouted at the owner of the cart, - do not look, children, turn away.

- Whats wrong with that? - the owner of the cart objected in amazement.

- Yes, how can you carry this for show?

- As if not everyone knows about this when buying beef meat, - the owner of the cart justified himself.

- It would be possible at least to cover your cargo with something, I will complain about you to the management, because I also have children with me.

- Oh, yes, complain anywhere and to anyone, I don't care.

Enraged, Mikhail attacked an unknown man, and as soon as it started, the fight was stopped by the sellers.

"There is nothing to go to the market with children," the owner of the car shouted to him, straightening his clothes torn off in a fight with Mikhail.

- I just forgot to ask you about it, - Mikhail answered in anger, hastening to leave the market territory with the children.

- Thank the children for leaving safe and sound, otherwise ... - the owner of the car threatened in response, - but nothing, I remember you, mind you, and we will meet again.

- Let's go children as soon as possible from this bad uncle, - Mikhail suggested speeding up his steps.

"I will never eat meat again, mother," Gv promised at home.

anza.

- And I, too, - supported her brother, - because I feel sorry for the cows.

- Why, what happened, but explain to me really, - Maka asked, turning her gaze to Mikhail, who still could not recover from the recent incident.

- They will tell you everything, Maka, - Mikhail suggested to his wife, having gone to put himself in order.

- What happened, son? his mother asked.

- Nothing serious, except for the fact that a person's life eventually loses all colors, colors and taste.

- Well, I'm not the first to hear this news, son, - but I still have to live.

"Pull yourself together, son," Mikhail's mother hugged, "after all, you are a man with us and, moreover, the only one, not counting the child Vakhó."

"Thank you, mom, you are the best support and help in life for me," Mikhail hastened to thank his mother, moving away from her embrace.

- Time is never easy, son, you know, your father and sisters and I also had to go through a lot.

Okay, I'll move on to Achiko now, and you take care of mine, okay?

- Well, son, go, take a little soul.

The neighbor's estate greeted Mikhail with the barking of the dogs guarding him, who immediately ran out with a noise towards the uninvited guest.

"Cherna, hello, buddy," Mikhail hurried to caress the big yard dog, who, recognizing his neighbor, began to wag his tail approvingly, stopping barking and whining with the joy of meeting with an old acquaintance.

- Well done, smart girl, he recognized me, - Mikhail continued to stroke the head of his old four-legged friend.

- And what kind of dog is this, Cherna? - Mikhail pointed to a small dog with a black and white color that continued to bark at the guest with vicious fury. - Tell him to stop barking at me before I kick him.

- Bobo, shut up, quickly go home, - followed by the stern voice of the owner, an elderly man who came out to the barking of dogs.

- Oh ..., - he drawled with joyful surprise, - whom I see, Mikhail, our rare and welcome guest.

- Hello, Uncle Archil, - Mikhail greeted the owner of the house, banging his fist on his fist. "Now it's fashionable to say hello like that," he explained.

"This is in your city, but in our village everything remains the same," said the owner of the house, "except that the young people all fled to the city a long time ago, and no one here wants to stay or work on the land.

A lively and urgent conversation flared up between the neighbors.

- It's women who are to blame for everything, Uncle Archil, - said Mikhail.

- Well, yes, of course, where would it be without them, - the owner of the house agreed, escorting the guest to the estate, - they are the cause and head of everything, and all joys, and all troubles.

- Judge for yourself, Uncle Archil, if they are bored with living in the countryside and everyone runs to the city, then what is left for us men to do?

- Agree.

- Once I bought special crayons against red cockroaches, separately for females and separately for males, until one smart saleswoman, to the detriment of her marketing affairs, advised me to buy only scaring crayons for females, claiming that they would run after them without them mela males.

- Come on, I'll show you what kind of garden I managed to plant.

Although the days of harvesting were drawing to a close, the elderly neighbor had something to boast about from the harvest he produced alone on a relatively small plot of land.

Without interrupting the conversation with the guest, he quickly and dashing walked along the raspberry beds of the site, having managed to collect red juicy berries in a small basket woven from herbs.

- Here, take it to your women and children, maybe at least this will awaken in them the desire to move to live in the village.

- Thank you, Uncle Archil, but this will not help, - Mikhail answered with confidence, accepting the neighbor's gift.

- Why, what keeps them so in the city?

- Allegedly, the level of education is higher there, if you ask my wife.

- And what about us, in the village, is there no school?

- And then, after all, for the most part, they switched to distance learning, but for the Internet, what are the problems in time and distance?

- I don't know, Uncle Archil, you've heard that the madness of the brave is the wisdom of life.

- In this case, stubbornness rather.

- Yeah, stubbornness, prestige and herd mentality.

- Here are all her classmates, they say, they have been in the city for a long time, and she has lived enough in the village and now wants to drink the rest of her life in the city.

- In a city where there is now neither work, nor a normal salary, nor a healthy climate, nor environmentally friendly products, and people who are a match for the present time, they have changed a long time ago and not for the better.

Look and taste the smell and taste of greens and tomatoes, - the owner of the site extended his hand with the products from his beds. - And what pumpkins I have born, admire them and go deep into the garden, I will show you my corn crops in an embrace with green beans.

- Yes, here you have a real paradise, as I see it, Uncle Archil, how do you manage all this household alone?

- And so, it's true, my sons and daughter with their families come to me for a few days and then rush to their city buildings, while complaining about the hardships of city life.

- Now in Europe the trend is the change of city life to country life, and although we are striving for it, but its way have not yet reached us.

- And what about Europe, son, she has her own life, we have our own. We lived somehow and quite well without them, and we would have lived on in peace. And then they did it like parrots in their time: freedom, independence, what kind of freedom can we talk about when foreign emissaries teach us the basics of their "democratic" life.

“Thanks to my sons, you see,” Archil pointed to the telescopic television antennas installed on the veranda of his two-story house, “I watch every evening after work what is happening in Europe and in the world.

- Yes, times are not easy now, - Mikhail agreed with him.

- And before they were not simple, we just shouldn't complicate life with fashionable concepts and pseudo-requirements. They fed, watered and protected from strangers, what else did we need?

- They did not appreciate it, so now we are paying with our territories and pastures for livestock, which are becoming less and less as a result of the so-called borderization.

- Eh, Uncle Archil, who asks us, ordinary people, what the rulers want, they do, and we all have to pay for the consequences.

- So after all, they continue to go with the flow of life in the same direction. In previous years, everyone was well-fed, shod and provided with everything necessary for a full and high-quality life. Free health care, education, cheap food, medicines, tickets, including long-haul flights, and much more, but now what?

More than thirty years have passed, and I have not seen anything good to improve the quality of life of the majority of our population. If it were not for the village, the hardening of the people of my generation and their love for the land and for rural labor, what would have happened?

“It's hard to even guess,” Mikhail agreed with him.

The owner also showed the guest his farm with chickens, ducks, pigs and sheep.

- Here are those that have not ripened the fallen fruits from the trees, I collect, brew in large tanks and give them to eat, - the owner explained.

Soon they were tasting last year's wine, the tasting of which moved to a small table, on which an appetizer quickly appeared.

- Uncle Archil, I am very pleased to spend time with you, but I need to return home, - Mikhail admitted to the owner, - I also have things to do.

“Nothing, Mikhail, things will wait one day, and God knows when our meeting will happen,” the owner turned on the entire arsenal of means he had in service to keep the long-awaited guest at his place.

He succeeded so skillfully that the guest was hardly taken away from him by his wife who came after him.

“Wherever you go and what you don't do, but you have only one end Misha, - get drunk and get drunk, what kind of attack on my head,” Maka complained, hardly leading her tipsy husband. - Mom and children have been waiting for you, and you?

- And I'll come to you with the same, - Mikhail stumbled on a hillock of a rural dirt road, barely keeping his balance. - Didn't you wait for me? he hiccupped loudly.

- And what if I don't know how crazy I am about you, especially when you are in such a state.

- That's it, I always remember about it, - Mikhail hiccupped again, - sorry, that's why I always strive for such a state, understand?

- It's clear, understandable, be careful here, there are a lot of irregularities about correcting which I have been constantly asking you for several times already.

- Tomorrow I'll fix everything, my dear, - Mikhail promised drunk, - so long as our love does not suffer.

At the entrance to the house, an excited mother was waiting for them, who had come out into the yard.

The crickets continued their chirping despite the chilly evenings.

Mikhail voluntarily raised his head and looked at the clear, cloudless night sky with stars hanging on it like garland light bulbs.

Does it look like the weather will be fine again tomorrow? he concluded happily.

- What's the point of this? - with difficulty kept her husband Mack.

"Well, why, my joy," Mikhail hiccupped again.

- Why, why, yes on a head of cabbage! Tomorrow evening we are invited by my brother to the neighboring village.

- Not a star? - Mikhail paused his move, - what, really?

"Really," Maka nodded.

- Well, it's wonderful, my joy.

- Don't call me your joy.

- What would you like to be called? - Mikhail, swaying on his feet and barely keeping his balance, tried to sort things out with his wife. - Have you managed to become someone else's joy?

- Oh, come on, let's go better, otherwise mother is standing at the doorstep, waiting for us, God forbid, she will catch a cold.

- Here, mom, I hand you my son, I have enough for today, and tomorrow he will get drunk again in the evening in his brother's family.

- Well, what's wrong with that? Mikhail asked.

- Why not go to visit them? the mother asked.

- Well, how, mother, do they help us in any way they can, they look after our cow, supply milk and cheese, raise our pigs?

- Yes, there is no reason to refuse them small things either.

- They'll be offended.

- Mom, she cannot understand one thing, that times rule, not rulers and wives, and if today she had to lead me by the arm, then tomorrow and for the rest of my life I promise that I will carry her in my arms.

- Oh, you should carry yourself somehow and cope with your weight, where else can I be in my arms oh carry. Stop pecking at this lure of your promises at the beginning of our relationship, and now ...

- What now? Mikhail asked.

- And now, if you want to eat my cake tomorrow morning, then go to your room to sleep!

- For the sake of the cake and my beloved, I can do almost anything! he said as he left his wife.

- Cake and wine, - with a small remark hastened to edit the speech of her husband Mack.

She later had to take her soul out via video link with her cousin Eka.

- What's new with you, sister, how are the children? What's new from Vano? she asked.

- Oh, I don't know, Maka, even what to say, - the cousin complained in response. - He can't sit there anymore, he's rushing back home, and who will pay off our bank debts, I'll never know?

- Missed, probably, both for you and for the children?

- Yes, of course, you know how difficult it is to live in a foreign land for a long time, even if we are surrounded by mountains of gold there. Moreover, both with work and with a permanent residence permit, it became tight there.

- And I don't particularly resist either, since he, in my opinion, has someone appeared?

- How do you know? Did he tell you about it?

- As if you do not know the fate of beautiful men, who will let them stand idle.

- Yes, perhaps, I perfectly understand you, sister.

- What's new with you?

- What can we have new, my husband is drinking heavily again, and his whole family is on my neck, fortunately, my mother-in-law helps a little, but she is old and can't do much, and with the death of her husband it seems that she completely morally gave up.

"He promised you not to drink anymore, did he?"

- You won't believe it, as if out of spite, after his repeated assurances and promises, table situations seem to be looking for him.

- A thief, as they say, what you need, dark night and chance. It's just a pity that he squanders his talent a little, because you know that neither time, nor word, nor opportunities come back.

- Yes, just like the unreliable substances lost by my husband, such as power, luck and fortune, which, as if in an instant, turned their backs on our family, hitting waves against the rock of pride, anger and envy of his new bosses.

He did not go to worship against pride and principles and fled, one might say, from the battlefield, and now, six months later, he is asking to return to battle.

- It seems to me, Eka, that he rushes back more to you and to the children than ...

- I would be glad to be sure of this, but you know, my attractive appearance also let me down more than once.

- Do you mean the classics, you can fall in love with beauty, but fall in love only with the soul?

- That's it. Often, when one is given, one is deprived of another.

- In what for example?

- The ability to distinguish one from the other.

Remember, I recently shared with you that beauty is more important for someone in a woman, for someone to know how to cook borscht, for someone sex, for someone thinness ... but does anyone care about the soul?

- Yes perishing, as ingeniously and as touchingly said. It is more important for my husband that I bake cakes, pastries, sweets for him.

- After all, it is strictly forbidden for him to eat flour and sweets, because he has type 2 diabetes.

- Both I and he know this very well, but what can I do?

- So at least she herself does not bake these nasty things to him.

- So if I do not do this, he will look for them on the side.

- Can you imagine how sweet it is for you.

"The parasite, not the sweetheart, exhausted my whole soul, and now there is no normal life, neither with it nor without it," Maka complained.

- No wonder they say that sugar is a lethal drug and is eight times more addictive than cocaine.

- Yes, these three scourges of modern man, ruining his life ahead of time, are sweets, fat and flour. And how difficult it is not only to refuse them, but even to minimize consumption.

- Add to them, alcohol, cigarettes and everyday hassles, and then listen to reproaches addressed to us, they say, women, take care of men. And who will take care of us?

- I don't know, Maka, I don't know, so many problems fall on your head, you just don't know sometimes where to go from them?

- One clever saying advised that if there are no problems and headaches, then check your pulse in order to make sure that you are alive.

- How fun it sounds, if it were not so sad, - said Eka.

- And I also liked the post about love on the Facebook site, in which there was a photograph of a sleeping man with a pig nose due to the fact that he was pressed against the wall in his sleep, the inscription that love is waking up five minutes earlier to see how he's sleeping. Cool, isn't it?

- You know, I've seen my husband in this perspective more than once, - Maka involuntarily chuckled.

Congratulations, it means you really love him! Eka concluded.

- I love, of course, I love, but where else can I go, after all, after all, he is the father of my children.

The Skype conversation between the cousins lasted for more than half an hour.

Having poured out the anxieties of their souls to each other, they parted until the next video call.

XXX

The politically unstable situation in the country, battles and strife flared up even against the backdrop of covid-pandemic restrictions and sanctions with the approach of the autumn parliamentary elections.

United into a single opposition force, various parties did not weaken the pressure on the ruling party, which still continues to enjoy a majority of votes in parliament.

The disagreements between the two main groups boiled down to several issues: the creation of a coalition government, the release of political prisoners, the reform of the judicial and electoral systems, etc.

Continuing massive job cuts, rising unemployment, meager wages and pensions, led the country to even more massive impoverishment against the background of the fall of the national currency against the dollar and the euro, and as a result, to an increase in prices for all products, medicines and services.

As if fuel was added to the fire, the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic that flared up in the country with renewed vigor, claiming the lives of more and more people every day. Almost all the main medical institutions of the country were filled to overflowing with sick people.

A negative psycho-emotional inaction on the citizens of the country was also exerted by the fratricidal war that flared up with renewed vigor in neighboring countries, taking the lives of many people.

It seemed that few people were destined to survive in such a situation.

Rescued, in this situation, and the Internet, which allows, according to the ostrich method, at least for a short time, to escape from reality and seek salvation, at least for a short time, in scientific and educational videos.

- And of course, a partial salvation was also mobile communications, although expensive, but allowing people to stick together in some way, and take their souls away in conversations with each other.

- Hello, Alexander, how are things with us on duty? was a common question among employees.

- As always, Mikhail, things are going on, the office is writing.

- Not so much an office as you and I daily reports, - a grin was heard.

- Where are you now, are you still in the city or did you manage to leave for the countryside?

- Yes, not yet, there is no money, imagine forty lari there and the same amount back. You have to wait, maybe one of the familiar fellow travelers with a car will show up, then you will be able to go at least one way for free.

- That's what I suggested when I saw you on Facebook.

- I climbed a little yesterday on the site.

- Do you have anything new?

- Fima wrote to me yesterday: what are we going to do, stop working in the Internet business?

- What is it all of a sudden?

- Here, they say, you do not invite new partners, you do not look for new people, and without this our Internet business does not go forward.

- What are you doing to him?

- And I told him: so that you live on our salary, and then we'll see how you sing.

- That's it! Do they have a country that is more economically developed than ours, where even if people do not go to work or work remotely, they are at least partially paid for it.

- Well, in part, they are that, he, along with his wife for two and a half thousand euros, have only a pension, and plus he works at a factory, and a well-fed hungry one does not understand.

- That's it! Alexander agreed.

- They plan to come to us again next year, if the borders are opened and flights are allowed.

- Yes, he also wrote to me about it in the messenger.

- And what do they think and what do they hope that we, like last year, will be able to receive them so generously. Then we managed with such difficulty to raise a small amount so as not to lose face and not violate our traditions of hospitality, and now?

- And what now, Mikhail, does he himself not know what debts we have on the Internet project, first of all, we have to pay for them.

- Well, debts are debts, and hospitality is hospitality.

- And now what do you propose?

- What do I propose? Cook crackers, - there was laughter on the mobile. - We'll have to create a separate fund, hospitality and save a little bit, maybe at least a little will be collected by their arrival.

- Oh, Misha, if there were sane people around us, it would be good for them, and for us, and they don't want a normal life for themselves, and we have a lot of obstacles from them.

- Well, yes, but they are masters of blaming the government for all the sins. What, they say, is the government doing to us, but what they are doing themselves, and they don't think about it.

- So they complain about others instead of doing it in their address. Okay, Misha, I still have to get to the market to buy groceries and then back to work, so we'll contact you later.

One of the city's main food markets, always bustling with customers, now looked empty, despite the variety of products that had markedly risen in price.

Among the thinned buyers, it was not difficult to notice a TV journalist and operator of one of the opposition television companies.

- Oh, these TV reporters, - one of the buyers of the market muttered under his breath, - don't feed them with bread, just give them the opportunity to shoot such stories.

- What, aren't they right? - one customer suddenly intervened, - after all, at least someone should convey our voice to the government.

"Yes, who needs us, who remembers us, they would only fill their own pockets and live at our expense," another customer intervened.

"Today you can't buy anything either on the market or in pharmacies, so everything has risen in price, - a third one joined.

Alexander's ears rang, and he hurried to leave as soon as possible.

- How much can you talk about the same thing instead of at least trying to do something for yourself, - Alexander mentally opposed.

Having reached home not without difficulty, tired from the almost sleepless night watch, he laid out the products bought at the market on the kitchen table and, looking at them, thought with regret:

- It would be right now for someone to attach all this and cook.

All the time that it took him to put himself in order, two primordial feelings fought in him with each other, the feeling of hunger and sleep, of which the first more often won.

Suddenly, a cell phone rang.

- Sister, only you are not enough for me now, - a thought flashed through Alexander.

- Well, how are you?

- Yes, just got dragged from work.

- I was at your place and left something to eat in the fridge. Eat, turn off your phone and get some more sleep.

- Yeah, thank you very much, I'll call you tonight from work.

It was not possible to wash off the road, the water was turned off due to an accident in the neighboring area, so they had to wash their hands with water from a plastic bottle.

- Young sister. - thought Alexander, - it helps out a lot. Sometimes you can't do without it.

In the evening, barely having time to get to work, Alexander sat down at the computer, looking first of all at the messages received via the Facebook messenger.

- Why don't you write me more and don't call me? - complained Thea, - fell out of love, or did you have someone?

- How can I stop loving you, dear, you know that you live in my heart forever. How are you, how is your health?

The answer to his message from Thea was received later, by twelve o'clock at night.

- I still feel, Sandro, how the energy of attraction of your soul has weakened. It's like someone is stealing from me.

- Here is the devil, - he thought to himself, - here it is, female intuition.

- I don't want to share you with anyone, do you hear?

"Me too, Thea, but in your case, I have to put up with it.

- Like this?

- Well, you have a husband, beloved and loving, and your family is here.

- Yes, but it's completely different, how can you not understand it. Each person has his own place in life, in the heart of another person, and I have a big one, and there is enough space in it for everyone.

What about me, is it small?

- That's what he said.

Alexander was well aware that in fact, feelings for Thea had long been dissolved because of feelings for Keti, he had long felt like a steel ball, under the influence of two magnets alternately, rolling from one to another.

Keti felt Thea's attraction to Alexander, and therefore, with the help of ever new tricks and tricks, she tried to spend more time with her lover, to the point that she had to work with him not only in his old, unfinished projects, but also to draw him into her own, even when she could well do without his participation.

"A man of all loving women loves the one next to him the most," Alexander admitted to himself.

How easily a person turns into a polylover, he thought, and how love for one siphons off the power of love for another.

Perhaps, and because of that, his favorite cartoon was a cartoon about a crow, which in turn fell in love with all the animals of the forest in which it lived, eventually receiving beatings and expulsion from the forest for its feelings for all.

Although feelings for Keti prevailed, but all the same, feelings for Teya did not fade.

Truly, a person lives only when he loves, - Alexander felt, - another thing is who perceives this feeling, and who calls what love.

He spent almost the whole evening in correspondence with Keti and Thea, as well as with new friends, to the music of the beloved Secret Garden group.

Alexander did not consider himself a poet, but he deeply felt poetry.

In the morning of the next day, having written a report on the duty carried out and again immersed in his favorite melody, he barely had time to write the following lines on paper:

I'm like crazy, crazy!

Such a night brings sometimes

But fortunately, this is not for long ...

The mind will wake up in the morning, as always.

And everything will return to its original place,

And the lines of the terrible night that has flown away

They lay down on a sheet, lived until the morning ...

I am full of joy, a victory won:

Again the mind leads me!

What about the night? Is it cheating, right?! - I do not know,

But the memory of the past is heavy ...

- Indeed, what is more important than the goal is the creative process itself, - a thought flashed through Alexander, who hastened to fix it on a sheet of paper too:

More important than the goal is the creative process,

May you not reach, perhaps, to the goal.

At least you will find happiness in walking.

- No, but still it is better to reach your goal, - Alexander opposed himself, - and in life everyone must conquer his peak, at least in order to justify his destiny.

"Knock, knock," there was a knock on the door, "may I?"

A fat woman under seventy, short in stature, in overalls asked to visit.

- Yes, of course, Allah, what are we talking about? Alexander kindly allowed the morning guest to enter.

- I'm not for long, just a coffee to drink.

- You can and for a long time, who bothers you, you know what

Oh, I'm always glad to see you.

"Oh, work interferes, if it's not okay," she complained, sitting down with a cup of hot coffee, "every day the same thing, you clean it, but there's little use, I'm tired of all this.

- Since you are tired, you need to look for something new, what you could do with great enthusiasm.

- Eh, Sandro, what time is it for me to do something new now, I could hold out here for a couple more years, and then I would sit at home. Although even there they will not let me rest at home, my husband and son. And the pension is so big that it is barely enough to cover my bank debts. One way or another, my husband and I lived our lives, but I worry about my son, he is still alone.

But did he have a wife?

- She was and swam away. Did not get along.

- It's a difficult question. Finding a life partner today, with whom you could live the rest of your life, as they say, soul to soul, is a daunting task. Well, here you are with your husband, for example - well done, how many years have been together, - Alexander praised his colleague.

- Soon there will be fifty.

- You see, where can you find something like that now?

- You know, he still loves me. Regretfully escorts me to work and looks forward to my return. Why didn't you arrange your life?

- The irony of fate played a cruel joke on me, at first I could not get married, because there was no apartment, since two sisters lived with my parents with their families, and now I can't for an absolutely opposite reason.

- How is that?

"But it's very simple, many people want my apartment and my parents, but, as it turns out later, they don't have me," Alexander chuckled. - Each time produces its own kind.

- Oh, I don't know, Sandro, in our time it was much better in all respects, now it's a plus to everything and health is not the same. Somehow, during the last visit of the president of our company, he accidentally saw me along with another cleaning lady at the entrance to the reception, and then they conveyed to me his surprise about my age, they say, how is she still working? We used to be better. More and more bonuses. They were also given for long service, the whole company often went out of town, picnics, parties in restaurants, and now our life has become impoverished.

- Nothing, Allochka, the old days will return, - Alexander consoled his colleague, - the main thing is not to lose patience and hope.

- Eh, I don't know, Sandro, who knows? Well, I'll go, otherwise there are still a few rooms left to clean, soon the employees will come to the office.

- For all normal people, the working day begins in the morning and ends in the evening, but with Mikhail it's the other way around, topsy-turvy, - thought Alexander, going home.

On the way, he was overcome by vain thoughts in his soul, the two most beloved women in his life fought for his heart, and in this struggle one or the other alternately won, depending on which Alexander's thoughts dwelt on more.

Like between the two banks of a large and deep river named love, his difficult bachelor life was now flowing, not wanting to lose any of them.

XXXI

When you fall through life from something, the logical solution is to look for the cause of the fall, if only for the sake of sports interest.

And the best opportunity to get comprehensive knowledge on any issue and in the shortest possible time, of course, is a computer and the world wide web that drives it.

And although it is believed that long and prolonged work on a computer breaks a person and sucks out a lot of energy and life-giving forces from him, nevertheless, in life one had to sacrifice one thing for the sake of acquiring another.

Moreover, in this direction, science did not stand idle for a long time and invented new devices, like Neutronics and its various modifications of antennas and devices that eliminate resonant wave effects on the human body, causing various oncological diseases.

- ABOUT...! - this is what Alexander told me about in his time - interesting information that deserves due attention.

“Yeah, I heard about that too,” Julia confirmed.

- However, before them, as a rule, human health is undermined by many different factors. Here is ecology, and bad habits of a person, water, land, food, and, perhaps, most importantly, hostility of a person to a person.

- You're right, friend. - Julia agreed with her, - before, philanthropy was instilled in people from childhood in the family, then at school, at work, in universities, and now one can be horrified at what is happening at every step around us.

- As brilliantly said by the classic, - Thea paraphrased the quatrain:

But who are we and where are we from?

When from yesteryear

Remaining gossip,

Are we not in the world?

- And it will not be soon, if it continues like this, - Julia agreed, - and if anyone survives this apocalypse of ours today, then our children will remember us like that.

- I'm also talking about bread, everything flour and everything that is baked from white flour of the highest grade, I found such horror stories on the Internet that you can't even imagine.

- About bread and all flour, as a weapon of mass destruction? – asked her friend.

- How did you know that?

- From where you know! Through the Internet, of course.

Hmm, amazing isn't it? - Thea announced her thought, - if in the last years of the existence of the country of the Soviets it was often said, as I heard from my parents, that a new historical community of people was formed - the Soviet people, then soon the Internet community, thinking, reasoning, and acting by some general - Internet categories.

- The Internet, in fact, takes away one's own opinion from a person, and it is very possible that any dissent will narrow down among people soon and move into one common Internet thinking and general Internet categories, - continued the thought of her friend Julia, - and where is it then look for the so-called pluralism of opinions, for whose right and freedom of speech we fought. Everything truly great is created slowly and imperceptibly.

- So in life, not only everything returns to normal, but also strives for a common denominator, - Thea nodded her head.

- How many traps and dangers lie in wait for every person in his life at every step, - Julia was indignant.

- After all, it is not said in vain, to live life, not to cross the field, especially in our time.

- Yes, I also dug up information on the Internet that meat and sweets also lead a person to oncology, and in particular such meat products as sausages, sausages, sausages and the like. And what then is left for human food? - Julia said in surprise, - when we, people, ourselves make our planet absolutely uninhabitable.

- Vegetables and fruits! - Thea confirmed, - it turns out that we are biologically not carnivores and not herbivores, but frugivores. How interesting, isn't it? With all this, it is sometimes forgotten that we have long since poisoned the land that feeds us. The mere fact that radioactive clouds from the Chernobyl nuclear accident and not only circled the earth several times and fell as radioactive fallout on it, what is it worth? In principle, the whole basis of my chemotherapy and transfusion procedures is also based on alkaline formulations, in order to increase the P / H balance of a person in an alkaline environment.

- Thea, what about the treatment of oncology with soda, as suggested by the doctor Simancini?

"Ay, Joe, in critical situations, most people still lean towards traditional medical treatment, you know.

- It's easier, probably, when you don't know about all this, right? And meanwhile, no one forbids soda separately.

- Yes, of course, Joe, but when you come across this directly, then, willy-nilly, you have to delve into this issue.

- Yes, - Julia agreed, - although, as I heard, high-frequency positive energy and emotional vibrations also have a positive effect on a person, increasing the P / H balance towards an alkaline environment.

- Music and love, basically, not counting other small joys in a person's life, I guess?

- Not only! Successful marriage, childbirth, health and success of family members, etc.

"Yes, of course," Thea agreed.

But here, in a foreign land, we are deprived of much of what that can comfort and delight us. Is it only conversations with my relatives on Skype, and when I listen to music, it calms me down a lot. Not without reason, after all, in recent years a new direction in the treatment of patients, called music therapy, has become strongly strengthened in modern medicine. I recently came across an interesting expression on the Internet about music: if everything could be expressed in words, then music would not exist at all.

"Cool," Thea agreed. What about love, friend?

- What kind of love can we have here, Thea?

- And how are you doing with Konstantin, girlfriend? Forgive me for asking you this, but if you want, you can not answer this question for me.

- No, why, - thought Julia, - I fought for a long time, but in the end I resigned myself to my position.

- With what, Julia?

- He has been living with me on the sly for a long time and is looking for an opportunity to be alone with me, and I, too, have already given up on myself and got used to it.

- And what about your husband at home, Julia, your children and family? Thea wondered.

- And what about the family, they have their own life, and we have our own here, as they say *se la vie*.

But how is it, Joe?

- That's it, girlfriend! And what can I change, then I need to leave Konstantin's family, but where, to whom, into the unknown? In this case, there can be only one salvation, the one that you found for yourself, to return to your homeland, at least for a while, but then what will happen to my family, starvation?

- Can I help you with anything?

- No thanks, friend. Nobody can help me now.

- If you want, I will talk to Constantine's wife or Athena, and they will rein him in.

- No, what are you, - Julia was frightened, - they, in my opinion, already guess, but I don't want a loud scandal on my head. Leave it as it is, Thea, so be it. Everything in life is natural, what happens is what should happen. Yes, and my husband, too, I think, has long lost interest in me, because I feel everything from his conversations.

- What a horror, my friend, - tried to console Julia Thea, - I really sympathize with you.

- Thank you Thea, but take pity on yourself, are you better on a personal level?

- Not many, - Thea agreed, lowering her head, and after a while she continued, - my husband will return from swimming, fuck me properly and again in the sea. But you and I don't need men, but love, don't we?

- And who understands it, Thea? Here, for example, I recently came across a very short video with the title "There is no love, put up with it!"

- Yes, it is possible that this is already the case.

- And why should we be surprised after we crucified our love on the cross and expelled it from us, and now we cry for it.

"But it's different, Joe, isn't it?"

- No, Thea, I'm talking about this feeling.

- And what then, as a woodworm eats our soul, attracting to a loved one.

- Love! Love that still lives in us, and at the same time it is not there, no matter how trivial it may sound. And a person falls in love, in fact, not with a person, but reaches out and falls in love with love, with the feeling itself, we all know this very well.

- I don't know, Joe, I can only judge by myself and say that I can't forget Alexander, I feel that this is the only man in my life, and I can't help myself either.

- And he?

- And he, too, I'm sure, otherwise I would not have written so many hot and tender lines.

- Oh, leave it, my friend, for God's sake, all this is temporary, like everything else in this world. You will not have time to return to him, as he will meet another woman and forget about you.

- Never, even if another manages to steal him from me, then, as he says, I will forever remain in his heart.

- Leave, for God's sake, Thea. Have you fallen from the sky and you don't know what kind of men, males and that's all. Love is evil, as they say, you will love and ...

"Don't you dare talk about him like that," Thea interrupted sternly.

- I read an interesting thought recently, Catherine Deneuve says that if you want to keep a man's love, you don't need to marry him. Probably, this is the only way to bind a man's love to you for a long time ... And then, ideal love can only be by correspondence. It's easy to love from a distance.

- You know, recently I played a questionnaire game on the Internet about what kind of second daughter I would have.

- Well?

- A miracle photo of such an amazing little beauty came up that it took my breath away. It turns out that Alexander also had it in her daughters, can you imagine? He almost cried with joy with me, and then I again began to scold him for past mistakes.

"I understand you well, my friend," Julia patted her shoulder. How right Karl Marx was when he said that the actions of one collide with the actions of another, and the result is what no one wanted.

He will still be mine! – with confidence slammed Thea.

- What about Jonah? Julia was surprised.

- And he, too, will remain mine, pay attention to the expression, and he, isn't he also called? Thea caught herself thinking.

- Understandably! You are like that amorous crow from the cartoon forest, - Julia confirmed.

- Maybe yes.

- Oh, girlfriend, what else awaits us ahead on a difficult life path? Love is the intersection of not even two circles, but two spheres, and t oh, that outside this zone, the intersection is enmity, disputes, tears, pain and constant clashes, - Julia sighed.

- Collisions of two worlds, two oceans of two energies, or rather their reunion. It is not for nothing that even Saint Exupery spoke about the embrace of love, that we are all angels with one wing, and in order to take off, we need to hug. Even doctors often advise hugging each other, don't they?

Julia stared into her friend's eyes for a while, then slowly reached out to her and hugged her tightly, followed by a juicy kiss from Julia.

- I love you, Thea, - admitted a friend, barely looking up from her lips.

- Me too, - after a long pause, Thea looked at her friend in surprise.

- It was the sweetest kiss in my life - Julia admitted.

- And for me too, - Thea agreed with her, - but no more than that, right, Jo?

"Of course," Julia agreed, "despite the fact that we are in Europe, we will not become lesbians," her friend continued to smile.

- Undoubtedly! You know, Alexander and I had a funny incident, - Thea tried to change the subject.

- What is it?

- He somehow asked where and how I live here, and I started showing him a video about my house when my husband's parents were not there.

And what do you think he liked?

- And, listen further. Somehow I blurted out that this is my front and bottom, removing the corresponding parts of the house. So he then burst into laughter that he also wants this part of me, and still cannot forget this oversight to me and reminds me of it at every opportunity.

"Cool," Julia smiled. I can imagine how impatiently he looks forward to meeting you.

"I'm just as eager for this meeting, Joe. He is my everything, my life, my heavenly and earthly paradise.

- And you will kiss him at a meeting just as passionately? You won't be afraid of the coronavirus, because kissing is prohibited due to the pandemic, have you forgotten?

- Of course not!

- How I would like to be present at your meeting, - Julia sighed dejectedly.

We'll take a video and send it to you.

"I have a feeling that if you leave here you will never come back," Julia said sadly.

- What if you don't come back, but my family, and you, and Rico, what do you think, I will leave you here? No way!

"And when are you planning your departure?"

- Now too soon. And what else can keep me here, because my old woman, God rest her soul, is no longer alive, Jonah has gone on a long voyage, and I need to live separately with his parents for some time. If Riko suddenly gets bored, you'll look after my boy, won't you?

"Definitely," Julia promised.

- I will see my household, I will visit my daughter's family, I will go to the village to visit my father, he is also crying, he wants to see me so much, I will see the families of my brother and sister, and finally, I will meet the love of my life - Alexander. And then he never gets tired of repeating to me that he regrets that he lost me, he also admits that all his life he was in a hurry where it was necessary to slow down, and hesitated where it was necessary to rush.

- You and Alexander are downright swan-like loyalty and love. I hope that the second time he will not miss his opportunity. Oh, this damned tragic incompatibility of human desires and capabilities.

"I hope so too," Thea exclaimed happily.

- Me, Riko and your husband will not be easy without you.

"So I'll be right back," Thea promised.

- I don't think so, my friend. You can recover in your homeland, but Alexander and your family, and the homeland itself, will not let you go back, - suspicions stubbornly climbed into Julia's head.

- Ion is really not up to me now, all his life, from childhood, his parents inspired that a big ship was destined for a big voyage, so he achieves a high position in his nautical ministry, for which he needs this last long voyage, since for his career is the most important thing for him, and why should I interfere with this?

- Of course you are right.

- Do you remember how in the song from the famous movie?

First duty, first duty - airplanes,

Well, what about the girls? And the girls - then!

So, instead of airplanes, sailors have ships in their minds, and the larger they are and the further and more responsible the voyage, the higher the position. How are things going with the pandemic?

- And what about the pandemic, after all, flights have been opened, I have been double vaccinated, so I don't think that something will prevent you from returning to your homeland, and that in the near future I congratulate you on the same.

"Thank you, Thea, but in my case it's certainly a long-term prospect, if still possible," Julia said sadly.

- Never say never, Joe. You'll see, and perhaps even very soon, you and I will celebrate your return to your homeland together with Alexander and your husband in a restaurant.

- Honey to your tongue, Thea, and God forbid this happens soon, otherwise time does not stand still, taking away all our best opportunities. To ask me, it is precisely the time we lost that is that lost paradise and an irreplaceable human resource that steals all dreams and the fulfillment of all our innermost desires.

One of the last x, as it seemed to her, before leaving, a conversation between friends, which took place in the house of Thea's husband's parents, instilled in them a lot of enthusiasm and emotions that illuminated their path to a happy future.

XXXII

Time inexorably quickly rushed forward.

Some earthlings called the reason for this an increase in the speed of rotation of the earth around its axis and the sun, while the other part called the acceleration of scientific and technological progress.

One way or another, many had to admit the fact that if they were able to cope with the things planned in advance, they could do it quite well, then at the current time they had to act very quickly so that they could complete all the things planned in advance, as well as those that unexpectedly piled up people like snow on their heads.

- Natia, daughter, hello my dear, how are you without me, - the mother was worried about her sixteen-year-old daughter.

- Everything is fine with us, - the daughter responded via Skype video link, - only now ...

- What is "just here"? mother's heart sank.

"She will tell you herself," the daughter handed over the bond to her mother's aunt.

- Nora, what happened, what's the matter? asked a frightened female voice.

- Shochiko? What's wrong with him, how is he? she asked about the health of her twelve-year-old son.

- Shotiko is all right, - an aged woman hastened to reassure her mother, - here he is, just approached us.

"Mom, hello," the son waved his hand.

Like a stone block fell from the mother's heart.

What else, Nora?

- You probably haven't heard the latest news about what happened in the western part of our country?

- No, I didn't have time, - my mother justified herself, - I don't always manage to follow all the events in our country. What happened to us, Nora? Speak quickly, do not torment my soul.

"Julia, I can't even pronounce it now," Aunt Nora burst into tears.

"Speak, dear, do not ruin my soul," Julia pleaded.

"Khvicha and Khatia," Aunt Nora burst into tears.

- What about Khvicha and Khatia? - Julia clutched her head, - aunt, speak up. What's up with them?

- They died.

- How, when, why? Julia was horrified.

- They crossed the border through the barbed wire, went to us for shopping and for medicines, and when they crossed our Enguri, suddenly the floodgates were opened on the dam of the hydroelectric power station, and a large amount of water poured into the river at high speed and they died, and with them two more, a man and a woman, - sobbing from crying, Aunt Nora could hardly pronounce.

Julia was hit on the head with a butt, she did not expect the sudden death of her peers, her cousin and cousin.

For a moment, she was speechless and seemed to swallow her tongue at such a shocking tragic news.

Minutes of childhood that she spent with them flashed before her eyes.

When they managed to officially cross the border, across the bridge, they often met with each other. Less often Julia had to meet with their mother, Aunt Leah.

And now bam, that's all. Everything is so ruthless.

Julia for a long time could not recover from the tragic news, because of which she was not even able to talk with her children, only learning from them that they were with Aunt Nora, since classes at school were still held remotely.

- And where is the father, Natia? she asked her daughter.

"Father was away, but this evening he was supposed to return, and it is possible that he is already at home," the daughter explained.

- What is the other departure? Julia was surprised.

- He was going, it seems, together with friends to go hiking in the mountains for a few days.

- What now? What new hike, what mountains? Something he has become frequent lately with these campaigns. I am here instead of him in a foreign land, and he walks around? Did I ask him to look after you? Julia was outraged.

- And why look after us, we are no longer small, and then, next to us is Aunt Nora. Yes, and it's a pity for dad, since he doesn't have a job, should he hang around at home? - stood up for father Natia.

"Daddy's girl," Julia thought. "Again you are defending him, don't be afraid, he won't let himself be offended without you," Julia explained to her daughter.

Recharged even more with anger against her husband, Julia made him a video call.

- Hello, Tengiz, how are you? I don't ask how you are doing, because I'm sure that you settled down well, sitting on my neck for a long time.

- Hello Julia, again you start our conversation with a quarrel, you know very well what our situation is in the country, and then, I don't sit idly by, I'm constantly looking for a suitable job.

- Exactly, suitable, and not any, now we don't care about fat, to be alive, this is first.

- And secondly?

- And secondly, I have never been able to catch you on the Internet to talk, and you didn't even bother to call me yourself and ask how my health is, how my work is, etc.

- I was going to the truth the other day, Julia.

- The other day?

- And then I constantly get information about you through children and Aunt Nora.

And what does she have, you are not interested in?

- How not, but what is it?

- The fact that when crossing the river, Khatia and Khvicha died.

- Yes, what are you? Tengiz was surprised.

You should at least express your condolences to her.

- Condolences, Julia, well, I really didn't know, and I'll call her too by all means.

Julia ended the video call with her husband, as if afraid to find another proof of his adultery

The words of the unknown woman in her house still rang in her ears:

- Tengiz, where is the big towel you were talking about.

- Who is this, Tengiz? Julia yelled in surprise.

- Who are you talking to? - the half-naked stranger asked in turn, continuing to wipe her hair with the edge of the sheet.

"Go back to your room now, Salome," Tengiz shouted at her.

- Who is Tengiz? - Julia was indignant again, - what is she doing in our house?

"Calm down, Julia, I beg you, this is not at all what you might have thought," her husband hastened to reassure her.

- How dare you bring half-naked girls into our house in my absence?

"I told you that it's not at all what you thought. - repeated Tengiz, - I will explain everything to you now.

"I don't need your explanations," Julia continued to shout at him, "and everything is clear without your false explanations.

- Well, first of all, listen to what's the matter ...

Julia abruptly ended the video link. But this was in the recent past, and now, fearing a repetition of the past, she chose to cut off the video connection with her husband in advance.

Soon an excited Lidia Ivanovna entered her room.

- What happened, baby? she asked, balancing with a stick.

- I'm sorry, mom, - crying, said Julia, - these are my problems, excuse me for the trouble.

- So, - Lidia Ivanovna commanded, - you will immediately go with me and tell me about everything over a cup of tea. Do you think that I would so easily allow anyone to hurt my adopted daughter?

Julia rose from her chair, still sobbing after bitter weeping, and spoke of the shocks that had suddenly fallen on her head.

"I'm sorry, daughter, about all the events that you told me about," Lidia Ivanovna replied, "how much mental strength a person needs to survive all life's upheavals," she breathed heavily and, trying to overshadow the pain of her nurse, began to tell episodes own life.

- The loss of relatives and friends is perhaps the only irreparable loss for a person, bringing deep pain for many years, leaving difficult-to-heal wounds on the heart, and everything else is fixable, believe me, daughter.

Women's gatherings continued between women of different generations for a long time.

Later, Julia, having settled down for the night in her room, turned around in bed almost all night, experiencing bitter blows from life. She managed to fall asleep only in the morning.

In the morning she was awakened by the excited voice of Konstantin.

- Favorite! - it pricked her involuntarily, hugging the pillow with all her strength, she pricked up her ears to hear his excited confession in front of his mother, who continued to teach him the basics of married life.

- What is happening to you, my heart, calm down at last, - Julia tried to overcome the feeling violently rushing into her, - just look at this, but you don't ask me about it?

- Mom, no matter what I do for her and no matter how much I do, everything is small and small for her. And then this new mental illness of hers, jealousy, suffocates and does not give a calm and normal life to either her or me, and now she still gets it and our children, although they have not lived with us for a long time.

- Lord, what is happening to me? Julia was getting more and more worried. "Now, indeed, not everything and not always depends on us," she had to admit to herself.

"Son, I told you more than once," my mother taught, "that life often sends us people so that, looking at them, we correct our mistakes, and when we do this, these people will also change, or, at best, will leave our lives.

"Mom is better than the last, I no longer have the strength to endure her antics," Konstantin's excited voice came from the next room.

"And I have the strength to fight further with my feelings," Julia admitted to herself.

- I understand you perfectly and am very worried about your relationship with your wife, like no one else in the world.

- I believe you, mom.

- Try to limit the duration of contacts with her or completely reduce them to zero.

How can you not go home at all?

- Yes, stay with us for a while, thank God, we have a big house, we can all fit here.

Konstantin thought for a while, evaluating his mother's proposal, then involuntarily turned his lowered head to the right, fixing his gaze on Julia standing near the open door. Their eyes met for a while.

Julia was the first to tremble, throwing herself into his arms.

Konstantin digested in his mind the unexpected act of Julia, who for the first time in the history of their relationship arbitrarily rushed towards him, voluntarily becoming a prisoner of his strong embrace.

- Beloved, dear, - her heart was silently pounding, conveying spiritual confessions in Morse code, while Konstantin stood at a loss, not knowing what to do.

Some confusion seized Lydia Ivanovna, who was sitting at the table.

- Really, - she was surprised at what was happening, - the paths of unfortunate people intersect?

Tearing herself away from the man's chest, Julia looked into Konstantin's eyes with such a fixed gaze that she involuntarily squeezed out of him the involuntary question.

- You cried all night, didn't you, my little sparrow?

- Yes! How did you know? - Julia asked in a half voice, - in the eyes, probably?

- Not! My soul ached for you all night, "Konstantin admitted.

"My beloved, my only support," Julia burst into tears with renewed vigor, "take me somewhere far away from this accursed life, otherwise I will commit suicide," she begged him.

- With pleasure, - Konstantin agreed, - my friends just invited me to a picnic today, to a nearby exotic island.

- But I am?... - Julia looked in surprise at Konstantin's eyes.

- What you? Konstantin asked. "You will be with me instead of my wife," he hastened to correct himself.

But I'm not a wife, am I? Julia asked confused.

- And how are you, mom? Julia asked.

- I'll manage somehow alone, my children. I will not regret the rest of my life for the sake of a gift to you, at least one happy day. I'll call Athena, let her stay with me today, nothing will happen to her.

- What could be better than the feeling when you bring joy to people, especially to those close to me, like my son and my second daughter Julia.

- Yes, but I can't do that quickly, Kostya, - Julia said with regret, - I need to get ready.

- What time is it?

"Two or three hours," she said, after a moment's thought.

- A maximum of one and a half, sparrows, - Konstantin strictly determined, looking at his wristwatch, - and then I will need to call the guys to wait for us at the port with my surprise.

Julia appreciated her new nickname and hurried back to her room to prepare for her departure.

After spending one of the most beautiful days of their lives, the lovers returned home late in the evening.

Julia, almost clinging to Konstantin, walked with him in an embrace with a leisurely step.

"Put your head down a bit," the woman asked.

Obedying implicitly, Konstantin was unexpectedly rewarded in gratitude with a cascade of kisses on the lips.

“Thank you, darling,” she wrapped her thin and gentle hands around Konstantin's head.

“Do not forget that a pandemic is raging,” Konstantin tried to save himself from suffocating in her long kisses.

- Don't care, are you afraid?

- No, not so much a pandemic, but what they can see us, - Konstantin answered smiling.

- My big fool. I take it you'd rather we do this at your family's home in plain sight?

- Why not.

“Old debauchee,” she covered first the head, and then the chest of her lover with light blows.

But, as is the case, fortunately, it was not destined to live long. And this time it happened the same way, and the fault was the whim of fate.

At home, a depressing situation awaited the beloved. On the large table in the hallway, their eyes were drawn to Julia's red underwear and Constantine's ill-fated gold bracelet.

The heavy, long silent pause had the strongest effect on Julia, whose legs buckled, so much so that Konstantin, who was standing next to her, barely managed to hold her down and immediately seated her in a chair.

“Mom, Aunt Julia feels bad,” Ophelia managed to throw in a frightened voice, after which Athena rushed to the kitchen for heart drops.

- It's good that you missed my sister-in-law Aella, who in anger crushes everything, - Lidia Ivanovna warned after Julia managed to bring herself to her senses.

Athena, offended by the guilty lovers, did not utter a word.

- The fact that from my son, I expected everything, anything, I won't get used to it in the first place, but how could you, Julia? - Lydia Ivanovna uttered in an undertone, - to commit such a theft, I have never refused you anything, have I?

- I did not commit this theft, - burning with shame, Julia justified herself.

- Mom, I'll explain everything now, - Konstantin came to his senses, - I gave her a bracelet. She didn't steal anything, did she?

Julia's heart sank again in surprise.

- In exchange for her red panties or for her pretty eyes? Athena intervened.

Julia burned with shame, cursing everything in the world and, unable to withstand the intensity of the situation, silently went to the kitchen.

Behind her back, she heard the explanations of Konstantin, shielding her, taking all the blame on himself, but this did not comfort her alarmed.

- What did you expect? - Asked her inner voice - knowing that sooner or later every secret becomes clear.

Julia, having apologized to the owners and asked for forgiveness, retired to her room to collect her things and leave the house.

- Wait, Julia, - Konstantin rushed after her, - I'll explain everything to them, don't go, I beg you.

But Julia almost did not hear him anymore and was shocked by what had happened. Entering the bedroom, she saw her belongings on the floor, as well as a bag turned inside out and a red Barsik rummaging around in its contents.

Julia shuddered at what she saw, and again Konstantin barely had time to pick her up and lay her on the bed.

"Don't scare me, please," Konstantin pleaded, "I'll sort everything out, believe me, I beg you."

"But even that can't wash away the shame. Why did you need my underwear, Kostya, and why did you do this to him, as if you didn't know that it would all end like this? – bitterly Julia asked.

- I had it in a safe, - Konstantin almost burst into tears, - you can't even understand what you mean to me. My wife secretly stole the keys to my safe from me. I will kill this bitch, I will never forgive her for this.

He jumped out of bed and quickly walked towards the family.

- Mom, was she here and turned over all her things? Konstantin asked.

"Leave her alone, Kostya," his sister persuaded him, "of course she is, but who else is capable of such a thing?"

What do you want now, to make your mother feel bad because of your hating each other sluts?

Julia's heart sank even more when she heard such a "gracious" epithet addressed to her.

Soon Kostya took his mother to her bedroom.

- Ophelia, stay with your grandmother, okay, daughter? - asked her mother, but for now we will talk with Uncle Kostya.

- Well, mom, don't worry, I'll look after both my grandmother and my doll Sophia.

- Well, that's good. Mom, we will leave you for a while, - Athena asked.

Lidia Ivanovna nodded her head in agreement.

- Kostya, this document is probably for you? Athena held out a piece of paper wrapped in a cellophane file.

- What is it? - asked Konstantin, trying to examine the document certified by a round official seal.

- She was here with the police, in their presence she ransacked Julia's things and found your bracelet in her bag, about the theft of which an appropriate act was drawn up.

- Yes, she did not steal it, at least you can believe me, Athena?

- I can do that, Kostya, but you will have to prove it to the police already, and God forbid, not in court, otherwise, you yourself understand what threatens her.

- What a bitch, and by what right did she do that? Konstantin continued to lament.

- You forgot that her character is in her name. Aella is a whirlwind and woe to the one on whom it falls.

- I'm still not going to live with her, that's enough. Better a terrible end than horror without end, - Konstantin made the final decision, and let people say what they want, I don't give a damn about it.

A frightened Ophelia ran into the living room.

- What is it, Ophelia, what happened? Athena asked.

- Aunt Julia cut her hands, the blood is now flowing on the bed and on the floor.

Constantine and Athena, as if stung, rushed to Julia's bedroom.

PART SIX

XXXIII

This year, winter in the northern European capital came a couple of months earlier than the calendar.

The cold snap came at the peak of the second wave of the coronavirus epidemic. Services of the city switched to a remote method of work.

Mass demonstrations of protesters against restrictions did not subside in the homeland of Vano, despite the fact that an epidemic raged there, mercilessly devouring the health and lives of people.

- What's there again, David? - the woman asked, entering the living room of a rented apartment on the outskirts of an overseas city.

- What, again, these street manifestations, everything will not calm down, the arrests of political activists have already begun.

- What this time?

- They protest the results of the elections, which they consider to be rigged.

“God, everyone won’t calm down.

- The opposition bloc declares that it will provide a lot of evidence of election fraud, theft of votes from their voters.

- To whom?

- Members of the European Commission, European Parliament and ambassadors of foreign countries.

- In America, there are also statements about the falsification of elections and theft of votes.

This world, as long as it exists, will not rest.

What will happen to us, David?

- The opposition bloc will not achieve anything, because observers from foreign countries recognized the elections as legitimate, held in a competitive environment, despite the fact that minor violations were noted in a number of constituencies. Better go and bake your khachapuri, otherwise you are standing over your head, and flour is pouring from your hands.

The woman sat down next to her husband, putting her flour-covered hands on her knees, and also buried herself in her laptop, watching the protests of the protesters.

“We were so hoping to return to our homeland by the new year,” she moaned plaintively. - Wano has been waiting for this for a long time, and his family has been waiting for us.

- Mother, well, you see what's going on with us, well, where to return now, to this poverty and hopelessness. Better go, otherwise the dough will run away, or let me watch calmly.

“It’s not sweet here either,” the woman persisted.

- In any case, it is better than in our homeland, it is impossible to live according to the principle that both the sheep would be safe and the wolves would be fed.

- I'm very worried about Vano, it's so cold and windy in the port now, and also his old environment, - the woman sighed heavily.

- Well, what can I do? You know how stubborn he is. I persuaded him not to leave his former job with Lazio, and he and we would be calmer, Lazio looked after him, and now where he is and with whom, only God knows.

- At Lazio, he said that with the second wave of this pandemic infection, the number of visitors has sharply decreased, he has almost nothing to pay employees with.

- But there he was full and warm, and under the tutelage of Lazio.

- They almost always have work in the port, and they pay him there several times more than Lazio even in the high season.

- Well, you see, what can I do, - David spread his hands. - You first decide what you want, and then tell me, I will do everything in my power.

- How he is killed for his family and wants to put his children on their feet.

- And we, don't we care about the same thing with you, mother?

- And he was also unlucky with Agneta, dragged the guy into her nets, had fun with him enough, and then left him.

- And why should she bother with a foreigner without a normal job, without an apartment and without a prospect. Played and quit. It's like you don't know women.

- He loved her so much and I feel that he loves her to this day, but forbids me to discuss this topic with him. Maybe you can ask Carol what happened to them there with Agnetha?

- What's the point, I don't want to interfere in these matters. I say what happened there, I repeat as if you don't know the nature of women?

"If I were her, I wouldn't treat him like that.

"You're saying that now because he's your son."

"Whatever," the woman grumbled.

- Oh, that's enough, mother, better go bake your khachapuri, otherwise you already want to, and I'll look at our news.

Mother obediently rose from her seat and went towards the kitchen.

In one of the ports of the city, cranes were unloading cargo delivered from another country.

Hans worked on a crane, Beno and Vano worked as loaders on electric cars, unloading the site with the goods and transporting them to the warehouse area where Eric worked.

In anticipation of the unloading of the dry cargo ship, which, according to Vano's calculations, was more than an hour away, he decided to take a walk in the port area.

The clouds, driven by gusts of wind, no, no, yes, allowed the stars to peep out through their gaps.

- I wonder how she is now, - he thought about Agneta, - where and with whom? I would like to know why and why she rejected me?

Not far from the port pier, behind a mesh fence, the children, in the presence of their mother, were feeding two white swans that had sailed to the shore with bread.

Farther away, on a nearby jetty, the fishermen seemed to be waving their long lines in vain.

"Hi, Carol," Vano spoke first.

- Good evening, Ivan, - obeyed the answer.

- How are you, how are ours?

- Normally, only there is almost no work, in a word, everything is the same as before.

- And how are you, I hope, at least you have a better job?

- Yes a little. How is she?

- Who? Ahh, yes, it's okay.

- Don't say anything about me eagle?

- No, Ivan, I'm sorry, she even forbade me to talk to her about this topic.

"Tell her, if possible, that I still love her and think of her all the time.

- Ivan.

Even if she wants to, I'll marry her.

- You already have a fictitious marriage with her.

No, I meant for real.

- You already have a Wano family.

There was a pause in the conversation.

- Hello, hello, can you hear me, Ivan?

- I can't live without her anymore, Carol, you understand?

- I didn't think you were so serious.

- More than that, Carol.

"Well, I'll try to fulfill your request," Carol agreed, "only when, I don't know, on the phone, I think you shouldn't tell her this, because I know that she will immediately turn off the call, but when she meets, she will have nowhere to go." get away.

- Yes, yes, that's right, it's better when we meet, - Vano agreed.

- Only when I meet her, God knows, otherwise we almost never meet.

Carol where are you? – I heard a weak male voice in the receiver.

- Well, Vano, I went, otherwise my husband is already looking for me.

After a short pause, throwing aside the butt of a half-smoked cigarette, Vano dialed another subscriber via the WhatsApp network.

- Hi, Eka, how are you? - Vano replied to the drawn-out "yes", - his wife.

- Normally, only unrest began again in the country because of the last elections, and everything is unchanged.

- How are the children?

- They miss you and constantly ask if our dad will come soon?

- Not yet, Eka, you understand?

- I understand, dear, I understand everything perfectly, we are already very grateful to you that you constantly send us money. I only fear that some Scandinavian blonde would take you away from me.

- And I agree to the other, if there is a brunette or a brown-haired woman? - Vano asked in a cheerful voice.

"Only the brunette," she replied in the same tone.

- Why not?

- Because among brunettes I am the first beauty, which has no equal in the world, and given your maximalist tastes, I am sure that you are out of competition.

- Envious confidence, you won't say anything, nevertheless, keep in mind that I take you at your word and now I'm recording our conversation on the phone.

- You look at him, what do you have there, something has already happened? the wife asked defiantly.

- No, just kidding, for whom I can exchange my wife, my sweetheart.

"Look at me," Eka threatened half-jokingly, "if you don't know me, I'll leave everyone and everything, I'll come to you and get you both out of the ground, if anything.

- Calm down, everything is in order, you are out of competition, my dear. What about the last puppy? - Vano tried to change the subject.

- With Jerry, or what? Oh, Vano, you can't even imagine how affectionate and wonderful he turned out to be.

- Haven't sold it yet? Vano asked in an angry voice.

- And you ask your children this, they do not allow it and constantly play with it. He doesn't even eat without them now.

- You always follow their lead and spoil the children with it. I asked you to sell it urgently.

- I know, Vano, but I could not overcome the desire of the children.

"Ay, dad, I beg you, don't," the daughter's howl was heard, "we are all so used to him, he already eats with us, sleeps, walks and plays.

- What do you have going on there, Eka? - Vano was indignant.

- We beg you. Do not take it away from us, - Datozhka, Vano's son, joined the requests of the family members.

- God knows what.

- Riot on the ship - Eka laughed.

- I'll come and calm down this rebellion very quickly.

- Come soon, we are waiting for this, we kiss you, Vano.

Eka suddenly disconnected the connection.

- You can just go crazy that today, apparently, is the same leap year as the year, if they are not okay, - Vano warmed up, hastily pulling out of his pocket and lighting another cigarette.

You need to call Sandro, find out what's new at work, Vano thought.

The subscription is not available or has left the service area, - the voice of the answering machine was heard.

Then we'll call Mishka, - Vano decided, - Sandro will probably be asleep after a series of night shifts.

- Hi brother-in-law, how are you, how are you? - Barely getting through, asked Vano.

- Hello, old man, - Michael answered, - how many years, how many winters. How are you, where did you go, haven't contacted you for so long?

- Again in the same place, Misha.

- When are you going to return?

- It doesn't work yet.

- Promised like in the summer. And how much time has already passed. Will you be able to return to your fortieth anniversary by the new year, or at least in January?

- I don't know, Misha, I really want to, we'll see how it turns out, you know, but it doesn't depend on me.

- Understand.

- How are our wives-sisters doing there?

- Well, if it is possible in our time and we call accommodation.

- We are a little better, Misha.

- At least your salaries are normal and there are probably fewer problems with work, not like ours.

- But the prices are biting and a bunch of other problems, you can't tell about everything. What's new at work, Misha? How is the batono Bezhan, again puzzled by his senile ideas?

- And what about without them? After all, he must appear to his superiors from a business side.

- Has the company president returned from his trip yet?

- Not allowed, corona. Quarantine and all that, and then to Amer Ike, probably, where it would be better for him to stay, and here his deputy is in charge, with whom he probably communicates systematically via the Internet.

- Yes, now it is very fashionable for us, remote work.

- Vano, where are you, urgently appear at the unloading site, the crane operators have finished their work, - Eric's voice was suddenly heard over the internal radio of the port.

- Sorry Misha, they urgently call me, say hello to all of our people, I will contact you later.

- Okay, old man, with God and until the connection, - Mikhail said goodbye to him.

- Eric, where's Beno? Wano asked.

- This fool forgot his walkie-talkie in our warehouse, I can't contact him, find him urgently, Vano, and inform me later. Erik asked anxiously.

Vano finished smoking his third cigarette in a row, quickened his pace and headed towards the unloading area.

As he approached the ship's stockpile, he called out to Beno, whose forklift was standing next to his forklift.

The other forklifts had already begun to work, and his and Beno's electric cars were waiting for them to arrive.

Beno was nowhere to be seen.

Soon, Vano heard the melody of a harmonica from behind an old abandoned shack located near the unloading area.

Vano hurried to this place, approaching which he heard cheerful male voices more and more clearly.

Under the dim light of lampposts, he saw several sailors standing around.

- What's going on here? Vano asked indignantly, approaching the group of merry fellows.

"Vano, tell them to return my hat," asked Beno, who came to the rescue to help.

- So, men, finish this concert and return the man's hat, - Vano demanded sternly.

- Wow, look, our ward also found a defender, - said one of the sailors.

- So, guys, let's agree: neither you nor we need problems.

- What problems are you talking about, man? We don't have them and can't have them, but your friend will have to apologize to us, "said the tallest sailor.

- Vano, I swear to you, I didn't do anything bad to them, - Beno justified himself in front of his friend.

- Apologize anyway, cretin, - Vano demanded, - you see what they are like.

- I apologized more than once, it still does not help, but out of respect for you, I will apologize again.

- Well, you see, he apologized, guys, and now give him back his hat and forget about the incident.

- Vano, where are you, did you find Beno, when will you come to the place? Eric's voice came over the radio.

- I found it, Eric, we'll be there soon and start shipping.

- Stay in touch.

Vano turned off the radio and put it in his back pocket.

"First of all, take away the radio from him, guys," one of the sailors called for action.

Vano felt a blow from behind, his radio fell out of his pocket, the third sailor managed to reach it before him and smashed it with a sharp blow.

What are you doing, you bastard? - Vano shouted and punched him in the face with his fist, after which the sailor flew off to the side for several meters.

He easily dealt with the other two sailors in turn.

- Well, what about fur seals, who else wants to get in the face.

Beno grabbed his hat and, clenching it in his fists, watched in fright as Vano masterfully dealt with the attackers running up to him, until one of them took a metal chain in his hands.

Not at a loss, Vano rushed to the fire shield and removed the bucket and poker from it.

Two fighters stood opposite each other in anticipation of the upcoming battle.

Vano uttered his favorite phrase to himself: Oh, great Caesar, those who are going to die greet you.

Beno stood to one side as if hypnotized and watched what was happening.

With a few cunning and quick maneuvers, Vano managed to disarm the attacker and, knocking him to the ground, began to beat him in the face with his fists.

- Don't, Vano, that's enough, - Beno shouted to him in fright, - don't kill him for God's sake.

Suddenly, another of the attackers ran up from behind Vano, who was sitting on the victim, and hit him on the head with a shovel from the same fire shield.

Wano froze. Literally in a matter of seconds, his whole life flashed before his eyes. He slowly rolled over, first on his side and then on his back.

"No, you bastards, what have you done," Beno yelled in an inhuman voice.

"Let's get out of here," one of the attackers commanded in fright, leading the rest of his comrades with him.

- Wano, what's wrong with you? - shouted Beno, supporting his head, from which blood flowed, - wake up, please, I beg you.

- Death from iron is better than from hunger, - Vano whispered the well-known saying of the Spartacists in a barely audible voice.

Beno quickly ran to the warehouse hangars and reported the incident to Eric, who, declaring a general alarm, moved from the port security to the scene.

Two hours after the incident, Agneta's bedroom was shaken by the ringing of a mobile phone. It seemed like he had never called so loudly before.

"I wonder who needed me so late. I'm listening to you, Carol, - according to the inscription on the mobile, the name of the caller was guessed.

Instead of an answer, a woman's cry was heard and words barely audible through it:

- Agnetha. Agnetha.

- What happened, Carol, explain clearly?

"Vano, Agnetha, Vano," the crying continued.

- What is Vano, what's wrong with him, tell me e finally? - Agnetha's heart sank from what she heard.

- He is in the hospital, in the central city hospital.

- What about him?

Agneta sank to the floor, but soon gathered her last strength and crawled to the bed.

Thoughts one after another attacked her awakened consciousness.

- We must by all means get to the hospital and find out what happened to Vano.

Almost an hour later, she managed to get to the hospital, and then, after spending a lot of time and effort, to get the doctors to at least briefly see the wounded.

The consent from the doctors was obtained on the condition that Agnetha had to control herself and the visit should not last more than one minute.

Bursting into the intensive care unit, she saw Vano with a bandaged head with all kinds of tubes on his face and attached to a drip.

- Vano, dear, who are you and why, you've never done anyone any harm.

Agnetha was trembling all over.

The doctors, realizing that Agnetha would not be able to keep her promises with Carol, began to take her away from the patient by force.

- Forgive me, my love, - Agneta lamented, still continuing to hold his fingers, - just don't die, please, we will have a child. Vano, you hear, your child, your son, forgive me for not telling you about this before.

Through her tears, it seemed to her that Vano had a smile on her face.

- You saw, - she shouted, - you saw, he smiled back at me, which means that he will survive and be able to overcome his injury.

He is strong, lucky, he will survive, he will definitely survive.

- I did not notice his parents and friends - she complained.

- Nothing, this is not the main thing, the main thing now is that he defeats injuries, I hope that the news that you told him will help him in this.

Well, you stunned us all with your news, - Carol continued to reassure her friend, holding her hand, - why didn't you tell me about this before?

"I was afraid that he would find out ahead of time," Agnetha continued to sob.

What bad would happen from this?

I didn't want to burden him with thoughts about it.

- You are my fool, he would only be glad.

- You think?

- Surely.

- Lord, what stupid, blind and short-sighted these men are. - Agnetha complained, - and what do you need to think about when you sleep with a healthy childbearing woman, because sooner or later this happens.

Once I gave him a demonstrative performance with condoms, masks and rubber gloves, indirectly hinting at this, and he apparently connected all this with covid jokes. And then I was afraid that suddenly he would demand an abortion from me, and I really wanted a child from him - my brave, strong and handsome knight. Although once I dared to tell him about it, do you remember when I came to your restaurant, but there we did not have a conversation.

- If you want, then it will be so, and you are sure that there will be a boy.

- Yeah, - Agnetha shook her head in the affirmative, - the ultrasound showed, and the doctor said it.

- You are my charm, - Carol patted her friend on the head, - I would also not mind having a son from him, although I would still be able to cope with my own.

Agnetha had to be escorted home, with the promise that in the morning she would be informed about the health of her lover. Carol stayed with her that night.

Early in the morning, the head physician of the hospital went out to meet Vano's parents and friends who were waiting for an answer from him.

At this time of the year, the city dawned early and darkened early.

XXXIV

The measures taken by the members of the government to partially close the city, the curfew at night and in the evening, as well as the temporary stoppage of public transport, gave rise to massive traffic jams on most streets of the city.

- Wow, how much urban transport unloads traffic around the city, - the thought of the driver, who was listening to the next round of news on the radio of his car, flashed by.

- Batono Bejan, are you coming soon? A woman's voice called over the cell phone.

- What's the matter, Dali? the driver turned to his secretary.

- Here the workers came from the lower post, they say that they have a task on the fourth floor, which you entrusted to them.

- Well, what's the matter?

- Can I let them into the office?

- Yes, of course, I told the internal security, did they not warn the lower security about this?

- Yes, but, apparently, they once again decided to play it safe.

- Why didn't they call me? Who is on duty now?

- I think Misha.

- All right, tell them to let the workers in, I'll be there soon.

Soon a red Mazda car rolled into the courtyard of a multi-storey office building.

- Hello, Tamaz, - the driver who got out of the car turned to the watchman.

- Hello, batono Bezhan, - a friendly answer followed.

- Did you have to remember your youth when you rode a bicycle? asked the chief administrator, pointing with his eyes towards the two-wheeled transport leaning against the wall.

- And what remains to be done, batono Bezhan, it is too expensive for me and my partner Malkhaz to ride a taxi all the time.

- And how does Gregory get here?

- On foot, he's a former military man, it's not the first time, and he lives not far from here.

- Ah..., - Bezhan drawled, - then it's understandable. There are few cars today in the office except Heraclius, - he pointed with a glance at the Lexus standing next to his car.

- No, batono Bezhan, Irakli left this car, and he left with his deputy in his car.

"Dali, make me some coffee, please," asked the administrator, who entered his room.

- Now, batono Bezhan, - the secretary hurried to fulfill the request of the chief.

"Greetings to the working class," the administrator addressed the workers on the fourth floor, who were erecting a partition.

- Hello, batono Bezhan, - the workers responded in unison.

"Sorry, for the extra worry," Mikhail hastened to justify himself, "I was expecting other workers, and today this shift came, and therefore ...

"Nothing, nothing," the administrator dismissed, "the main thing is that the work is done efficiently and on time," the chief reassured.

Not having time to get out of the elevator, Mikhail had to answer the call of his mobile.

- Hello, Misha, how are you? Are we all right?

- Hello, Otar. Yes, everything seems to be fine, except for a small emergency, - Mikhail answered the caretaker of the aquarium works.

- What's happened?

- Estimate, last night, when I turned off the light in the aquarium, I found a small fish with a torn off head, I didn't find a net in the evening to get it, I thought it would endure until morning ...

- In vain, she will spoil the water.

- In such a large aquarium, such a tiny one is not so scary, Otar.

- The net is in the lower right aquarium cabinet, I told you. I can't take a taxi to the office every time.

- Calm down, Otar, in the morning I carefully searched for a headless fish and could not find it.

- Looks like her relatives finished eating?

- See! Mikhail replied with a smile. Are they your predators?

- Yes, of course, but you didn't know?

- In this case, add some food to them, apparently it is not enough, but only a little so as not to spoil the water.

- All right, all right, don't worry, everything will be ok. And yet, there, at the bottom, in large shells, a new offspring of white fry-gobies was bred.

- Yes, I know, they will also clean the aquarium well. And when they grow up, I'll take a few for sale, otherwise you won't go far with my beggarly salary.

- These are your fish too, in the end, you are free to do with them as you please, - Mikhail agreed.

- And how are things going with the fish from the aquarium on the seventh floor?

- On the seventh floor - order.

- From that aquarium, I will also need to pick up a couple of sharks for sale, since there is not enough space for them.

- There the fish are less agile. Except for one red fish, which, as soon as it sees me, when I go to them, starts dancing with joy.

- The instinct of subsistence is developed in them no worse than in other inhabitants of the animal world. They have a well-developed sense of smell, hearing, and vision. And the mind is also enough. I wrote all this in my recently published book on their breeding, didn't Sandro show it to you?

- No, no, he spoke, but did not show.

- Sorry, Misha, the circulation of this samizdat book was small. Therefore, for you and Sandro, I allocated only one book, and I want to give the second batono to Bezhan, in the hope that in the future I will be able to get at least a little money from him to buy new decorative ones.

- All right, all right, Otar, everything is clear, - Mikhail agreed with him, turning off his mobile phone.

"They won't let you go to the toilet in a human way," he complained to himself.

- Dali, call me, please, our performers Lasha and Merab call the cleaners back and tell them for me to check and refill antibacterial fluid at the start of each day.

- All right, batono Bezhan.

- Also, contact our electrician about the burned-out lighting in the seventh floor hallway.

- He said that tomorrow he will change this lighting first of all.

The working days of the administrator were not much different from each other and passed almost monotonously day after day.

Today he was interrupted by an unexpected call.

- Yes, I'm listening to you, - the administrator said in a tired voice.

- Bezhan, rather, please, - a woman's cry was heard on the phone.

- What happened, Lela? Bezhan was alarmed.

- Dad, ... dad, - a woman's voice was tearing up.

- What, dad, what? - the administrator's heart sank, - what's wrong with him?

"He fell from a tree," Lela continued to sob.

- How did he fall from the tree, what did he need there?

- He sawed off the branch on which he was sitting.

- How so? How is he now?

- Thank God, he is alive, but he is frightened and says that the right side of his body hurts, including the leg on which he fell.

- Call an ambulance, and I'll be there soon.

- I call an ambulance, but it's busy, you don't know what time it is now, more than half the city calls them, but they don't have time to answer everyone.

- Ask the neighbors-doctors, let them at least examine him initially, and I will immediately, immediately leave work.

- Well, - the female voice continued to sob, - can you bring some of your other doctor friends with you?

- Let's see, everything, do not leave your father and do everything as I told you.

- Batono Bezhan, did you call? - Lasha and Merab arrived in time.

- Guys, Dali will tell you everything what to do, but I need to urgently run. The red Mazda roared along the bypass roads. The roar of the engine interrupted the call on the cell phone. Who else is this at this time? the driver muttered angrily to himself.

- Bejan, hello, are you in the office? came a male voice.

- No, Irakli, I'm going for a doctor to the central clinical hospital.

- Something happened?

- Father fell from a tree, his wife called.

- How? When?

- Now.

- How is he now?

- Yes, the wife says that it seems nothing special.

- At his age, climb trees?

- Well, like this, as you can see, why did you call, something urgent? asked the administrator of the company's chief financial officer, who actually replaces the president who is away.

- Yes, not really, just, ... okay, then ...

- Yes, speak already, anyway, I'm still driving.

- Listen, we are here with the directors of departments collecting money for Vano, but what about you, keep in mind?

- Well, of course, - Bezhan agreed, - but we already collected for him once, didn't we?

- Yes, but we collected it for his funeral, and now it turned out that he also had bank debts. You understand that the family is not able to pay for them, in principle, because of this, he went abroad, do you understand?

- Yes, of course, I understand, - Bezhan agreed, having hardly managed to safely complete the dangerous overtaking of the cargo trailer.

- From one to two pieces from each of us, whoever wishes, if we collect at least ten thousand, it will not be bad, especially since this amount in currency will be reduced by three.

- Well, Irakli, what are we talking about, I'm with you, - Bezhan agreed, - as soon as I get back to work, I'll settle this matter.

- Excellent, Bezhan, have a good trip to you, as you clarify the matter with your father, be sure to let me know.

- Of course, Irakli, thank you.

An hour later, Bezhan, along with his friend, a doctor at the central city clinical hospital, was met near the gate of a country house by his tearful wife and mother.

- I think it's nothing serious, Bezhan, - the doctor turned to him after examining his elderly father, - just severe bruises. God forbid, there would have been fractures, he would not have behaved so calmly, but it would still not hurt to take x-rays to insure himself.

"Definitely," Bejan agreed.

- I'll ask our people from the hospital to help you with this.

- Thank you very much, Tariel.

- Come on, what are we friends for then?

- I don't even know how to thank you, because I don't dare to offer money.

- Hey, what else was missing, crazy, or what? When this damned crown runs out, invite me to your own restaurant, it will be interesting to look at it.

- Definitely what it's about. Now it is closed, government regulations, as you know.

- I know, I know, we ourselves, doctors, after all, advocated for this, - the doctor smiled.

- And you, Nikolai Valeryanovich, I strictly - strictly forbid you to continue climbing trees, at your age - smiling, the doctor turned to the patient.

The father smiled back.

- So, Bezhan, let him lie down for a couple of days, it is clear that he is frightened, although he does not show it, so give him something soothing now and at night too.

- In the morning, and late tonight, call me back and let me know how he's doing? Anyway, we are now stuck in the hospital all day long.

- Yes ..., - Bezhan drawled, - I certainly understand the position you, doctors, are in now.

- It's better not to ask, we are experiencing an acute shortage of everything necessary, and now even medical staff.

- Well, you served me today, father, - the son complained to his father, returning after seeing the doctor off. - It is at such and such a time when there are no doctors, ambulances, we are at a distance from the city, why are you going there and climbed...

- He collected dry branches for our stove, son, to provide a warm evening for our women.

- Wouldn't my son Sandro have coped with this?

So I helped him.

- Yeah, he helped, and cut down the branch on which he was sitting, who does this, father?

A kind smile floated across the face of an elderly man who had long ago passed his eighty years.

"Isn't that what everyone does in their lives," he replied, after a short silence.

- And you, on yourself decided to experience it, right?

The father nodded his head smiling.

- Well, how now?

But now I know what it's like.

- Come on, father, you only think about yourself. Ma, take care of it, I already have enough nerves.

- Olga Vladimirovna, accept your fallen husband.

- Come on, Nikolai, you only know what to scare your family.

Late in the evening, when passions subsided over the fall from the tree of the family elder, Bezhan and his wife sat down to watch a newscast on one of the opposition channels.

While the pre-information videos were on, Lela continued to smile from time to time, barely holding back bursts of laughter.

- What's wrong with you? the husband asked.

- You have a wonderful dad, Bezhan.

- Well, what's so funny, as if your father does not throw out various miracles?

- Forgive me, but I must say this, when I approached him in the garden, a folding ladder was placed against the tree, with a hinge inward, and as soon as he got to the top of its first half, the second closed with a hinge and, hitting him on the head, overturned to the ground.

- Well, here's another, made me happy, but where were you looking at this time?

- Sandro was in his room, I called him and together we lifted him up and escorted him to the kitchen, and then after dinner he stealthily left and made a second unsuccessful attempt.

- Well done, that's just you and leave your elderly parents. Okay, let's watch the news.

A news headline went on TV, and everything went and went after it.

- Greetings, dear viewers.

We start the issue with an emergency story from Africa.

- ABOUT! - exclaimed Bezhan, - shock, it's our way! We just didn't have enough of it.

“Be quiet, shut up,” a young blonde sitting next to him hit her fist on his shoulder. - Let me listen.

- From one of the remote areas of our city, - continued the voice of the TV reporter.

- Ah... - Well, it's a little better! Bezhan scoffed.

- This is how the government destroys supposedly illegally built houses of socially unprotected citizens.

On the TV screen, one could see how an excavator, walking through a dirt field soaked to the mud, traveled from one dwelling to another, easily destroying the walls of new buildings of the protesters who entered into hand-to-hand combat with law enforcement officers with its powerful bucket.

“This is how the real situation of our citizens looks like today,” the voices of TV presenters changed, “who built a house with bank loans in order to somehow protect themselves and their families from the onset of winter cold, and our government decided to conduct a punitive operation against them.

- And this despite the fact that before the parliamentary elections, candidates from the ruling party came to them and promised them to legalize their buildings in exchange for the votes they were supposed to receive from them.

“Why didn't I die when I voted for them,” a male voice of one of the affected residents was heard.

Then they showed a few more comments of the victims, zealously protesting, resisting and opposing the police cordon.

They also showed how a pregnant woman was carried out on a stretcher, as well as several arrests from among the protesters.

- Why does not one of the deputies come to us and intercede for us, as promised? shouted a plump woman from the crowd. - They got theirs, and now they don't need us and nobody needs us.

- They let us build our dwellings, - another woman was indignant, - which we built on bank loans, and now they swooped in like thieves on us and allowed everything to everyone. After all, they saw how difficult it was for us to build our dwellings for three months, they could not warn us before that they would demolish them.

- And what could they do, against illegal construction? Bejan objected.

Lela lifted her head from her husband's shoulder for a moment and looked at him in surprise.

“Illegal construction, without a proper project, is absolutely unacceptable,” he continued to explain, regardless of the reaction of his wife, “after all, our city is in a seismically dangerous zone and building without proper regulatory requirements is absolutely unacceptable, and in this case our City Hall is right.

- And this is at a time when the mayor's office sells land plots for nothing to deputies from the ruling party and members of the government, - Bezhan seemed to object to the voice of the TV presenter.

- One member of the ruling party, for example, was presented with one thousand four hundred square meters of land in a forest belt, worth at least six hundred thousand dollars, for next to nothing, - the male voice of the TV presenter continued.

“And this is happening in a country where half a million people eat on borrowed money,” was replaced by another, female voice of the TV presenter.

Three hundred thousand children a year die of starvation, one in five children is starving, and members of the government and parliamentarians drive around in expensive foreign cars and wear watches and jewelry worth much more than the cost of houses built with difficulty.

Adding fuel to the fire was a comment by the city's mayor, who said he would not allow illegal construction.

- And this at a time when our mayor's office made multimillion-dollar expenses for the purchase and installation of Christmas trees and New Year's lighting on the main streets of the city, - continued the male voice of the TV presenter.

- Moreover, the mayor's office announced a tender for three million dollars for New Year's preparations already and next year, lighting, Christmas trees, fireworks, etc. And one and a half million lari were spent on the current New Year trees.

- Just a feast during the plague, - Lela said in amazement.

- Trust them less, - Bezhan objected to her.

- Then don't look.

- Out of respect for you, I watch this bodyaga, - Bezhan explained, - and then you need to watch and listen to everyone and everything, but a person needs a head to analyze the situation himself.

- Shh ..., hush, - suggested Lela, putting her index finger to her lips.

- Aren't the employees of the Ministry of Culture people? – sounded the mayor's answer to one of the questions of journalists.

- And this is when there is a lockdown in the country, a curfew, and the number of infected and dying people is growing daily and the true statistics are simply hushed up.

- Horror, - responded Lela.

“So the lockdown has now been announced throughout Europe, and so far there is no other salvation from the coronavirus,” Bezhan explained. They did not want to live under the wing of a large and powerful neighbor, so we are getting it now.

- Is there a better life for ordinary people? I saw the speech of one of their deputies, who said that several tens of thousands of villages in the outback do not have gas at all, and gas is sold to Europe when local residents could pay the same price for it. And this is today in the twenty-first century. Ordinary people in our countries have no development prospects.

- What about in Europe? Don't talk about what you don't know, - suggested Bezhan.

On TV they showed speeches by members of the opposition parties who had declared a boycott of the parliament and refused to enter it.

"Absolutely all the institutions in the country have been taken over by a small handful of people," they argued, "and if one of the well-established people in this life manages to securely enclose their well-being with a high and impenetrable fence, he is deeply mistaken.

"While we hear every day about more frequent cases, hacking of banks and their ATMs, supermarkets, shops, pharmacies," one of the economic experts invited to the studio said, "if this continues, we will become witnesses of armed scams of citizens' houses, which by the way is already occurs.

"They themselves create the conditions for multimillion-dollar contracts, let them win for companies from among their close circle and individuals from whom they later receive so-called "returns" to finance their election campaign and ensure their luxurious life," another oppositionist said, "and the life of ordinary Citizens are absolutely indifferent to them.

- The city budget has not been fully read by any of the deputies of the city assembly, - continued the next oppositionist, - and so they squander Eurocredits that will have to be returned to our grandchildren and children.

So what do you think is the way out? the young journalist asked.

- There is only one way out, the one that all our united opposition has come to, is new, extraordinary parliamentary elections.

- Yeah, not only did they spend millions on these, but also appoint two new rounds, - Bezhan objected, - you contradict yourself and saw the branch on which you are sitting.

- Tell me please, what do you think about the consideration of the parliamentary majority that the parties that refuse to go to the negotiations proposed by the European Union will be deprived of budget funding, - another journalist asked one of the leaders of the opposition parties.

- That's right, - Bezhan concluded, - there is nothing to pay for nothing to non-working parasites.

- It was decided to add another six million from our budget to the assets of the ruling party, - continued another oppositionist, - and this is to ensure their luxurious life, for their bonuses, business trips and restaurants with members of government delegations from foreign countries.

- For easy control of the masses, a police regime has been created, - said the next oppositionist.

All institutions of government, both legislative and executive, have long been taken over.

- Wow, otherwise you had a crimson life, - objected Bezhan.

- But it's better than now, isn't it?

- What's better, Lela? The fact that at three in the morning they broke into sleeping citizens and forced them to transfer their property to members of their team? What did they do in prisons? Have you seen all these pictures yourself?

- The prison scenes are said to have been staged.

"It's as if they've committed fewer atrocities in the wild."

- Bejan, but I don't understand why it is impossible to try to create a coalition government, consisting of all political groups, as a result of fair and unfalsified elections? What then is there a democratic country?

- Leave, for God's sake, Lela, talk nonsense, so it was, is and will always be. Like you don't even know about it?

- According to the principle of the great "father of nations", we need territories, but will we deal with people?

"There is only one way out," one of the oppositionists said on TV, "it is the creation of mass resistance cells.

Isn't this a call to violence? the journalist asked.

On the contrary, it is non-violent resistance.

- Such as it was at one time in India, for example, and which brought the long-awaited freedom to this country.

- Pay attention to the fact, - continued another oppositionist, - how school principals and teachers, who refused to be their activists, are being taken now.

"They see and inflate only the bad," Bezhana objected.

- And what good has been done, Bezhana? Lela asked.

- To do this, just watch the news program, Lela. We paid utility bills for the entire population, issued financial assistance to citizens, as well as to small and medium-sized businesses, which are now in an extremely difficult situation amid the pandemic.

Many buildings and structures, roads and other communication networks have been built, many more examples can be given, the point is that each of us sees only what he wants to see, that's all.

- In front of the building of one of the regional tables of contents, a homeless woman died of cold and hunger, - said the next oppositionist.

- And what do you think? Lela asked her husband.

- Pa, - the son turned to his father, - you know that my car has grown old for a long time, and all my friends laugh at me, hinting at it.

- So what? Bejan replied in surprise.

- It's just that a very good option turned up on the internet, and if I sell mine, then I will need to add a little for a new one, but without your support, well, nothing, - Sandro hesitated.

- Son, what do you want us to be caught? The father looked at his son with bulging eyes.

- Why can't you ask? - he was alarmed.

"You can, of course, you can," the father confirmed, "with this question, turn to your mother, she has enough income from her accounting activities, let her add to you, and I'll go into the yard to get some fresh air, otherwise I'll All this gave me a terrible headache.

"Well then, I'll ask my uncle about it," Sandro said, receiving his mother's consent with a nod of his head.

- And you have enough conscience for this? - the father was amazed.

- And what?

- And the fact that he already bought you once, for your twentieth anniversary, a wheelbarrow, so be content with this. Conscience is also a good thing.

- But he was again elected a parliamentarian of the new convocation?

- He may not get into the new parliament, and then what? mother shook her head.

- After all, I will use this machine for family needs, - my son tried to explain.

- Leave my brother alone, - Bezhan raised his voice, - you can see for yourself what the situation is today.

Lela pursed her lips silently.

"You want both the sheep to be safe and the wolves to be fed, but that doesn't happen in life," Bezhan suddenly shouted and slammed the door behind him, going out into the yard.

Soon, Bezhan watched with pleasure the clouds running across the night sky, from which bright winter stars and the moon, as it seemed to him, were looking out from time to time.

- Thank God, the weather is at least getting better, - he remarked to himself, - otherwise they are already tired of the cloudy weather of precipitation.

On the slopes of the adjacent mountains, snow covers were full of luminous whiteness.

"Everything will be all right, son," as if a continuation of his thoughts about the weather, the reassuring saying of his mother, who quietly crept up to him, sounded.

- Mother, - Bezhan hugged her, - won't you catch a cold?

Mom shook her head.

"Thank you for being you, you and my father, you are my only outlet in life," he pressed his mother even more tightly, "live long, I beg you, the duration of my life depends on it.

Mother and son stood silently for a while, cuddled up to each other and feeling each other's warmth, and this feeling, incomparable to any other, gave them confidence that, despite all the difficulties, life is worth what both are now experiencing.

“Son, I baked your favorite potato pies, and you didn’t even have dinner today, you’re probably hungry, let’s go into the house, I’ll feed you and give you hot tea,” the mother suggested.

- And the father?

- The father has already tasted them for a long time and is already sleeping, - the son's mother reassured.

Entering the bedroom after a late dinner, Bezhan stopped in front of the matrimonial bed, on which his wife was sleeping, wrapped in a warm blanket.

He went to the radiator and lay down on a wide sofa next to him, dragging a pillow and a blanket there.

Ambivalent feelings of love for the mother and resentment and malice for the wife struggled with each other for a long time.

He heard a rustle behind him.

- Have you come already? - I heard the sleepy voice of my wife from the next bed, - but I didn’t notice.

Silence followed.

- Come to me if you want? The sleepy voice continued.

- In opposition? came the answer.

"Yes," Lela chuckled.

- Never! snapped a male voice.

- You won't come to cohabitation either? Lela continued to giggle.

- Not! Sleep better. I have today

It was a very difficult day, and to everything, my head ached a lot.

- It turns out that not only my head hurts, - Lela almost joked. - Okay, but be aware that you will remember it.

It seemed to Bezhan that his mother was sitting at the head of the bed and stroking his head, lulling him to sleep like in childhood with a lullaby, in a quiet voice, plunging him deeper and deeper into the fabulous realm of sleep.

Happiness stolen by everyday hectic life slowly, carefully and quietly sneaked up on him in a dream, in order to cover him with his mantle with one precise throw and not let him out of his captivity.

XXXV

Small children's fingers stretched the chewing gum removed from the mouth on both sides.

- What are you doing, Waho? asked the voice of an older man.

- Wait, pa, do not interfere, I watch how my mother's patience bursts when I do not obey her and do not immediately fulfill her requests.

The couple looked at each other, exchanging smiles.

- Maybe it's better to obey her, then you won't have to torture yourself or chewing gum?

“But then, after all, the mysteries of this process cannot be comprehended, and its experience cannot be transferred to other life processes,” Vakhtang explained.

"Crazy," said the father.

“Here they are, the fruits of your teachings,” said the mother with a smirk.

- So after all well, more will know in life.

- Aren't you taking away his childhood with your teachings? Isn't the compulsory school curriculum enough for him?

- It's better to always get ahead of the system, Maka, in order to be able to jump out of it at the right moment.

- Hmm, - Maka grinned, - and where to?

- Free, Maka, free.

Why did she annoy you so much?

- To all of us who like our life.

- Objective reality, there's nothing you can do about it.

- If you can not change it, then you can at least try to get ahead of it in time.

Believe me, that a person, any life experience will come in handy sooner or later. After all, life consists of a set of many similar processes that are closely interconnected with each other, and therefore if a person learns to be observant and successful in one of them, this will be equivalent to the fact that he will be able to make the right decisions in similar situations. Isn't that right, kids? Mikhail asked.

- Yes, of course, - Gvantsa agreed, - we think the same way, don't we, Vaho?

- Yes, of course, - the son agreed, trying in vain to get rid of the chewing gum sticking to his fingers.

- The efforts made to any business, as a rule, are never in vain, - Mikhail continued to teach. - And what you work on for a long time and diligently, inevitably improves, over time it starts to get better and better and comes to professionalism. Therefore, assertiveness is very important in life in systematic studies in your favorite business, which will certainly lead a person to the Olympus of victory, and the joy of sensations from it will overshadow all difficulties and obstacles.

- You are my philosopher, - Maka put her hand to the back of the head of her husband, who sat down at the table, - if you were successful in earning money, the family would be much better.

- And money will come after knowledge, isn't it, children? Money comes by itself.

“Yes, of course, my dad made new purchases for me and my brother last week, I got a dress, and Vakho were botas,” Gvantsa supported her father.

“But I didn't want botasov at all, I have so many of them, I wanted a machine gun,” Vakho expressed his request.

- You will have a machine gun, son, everything has its time, but for now, be content with a water pistol.

- I still want a sled, - Wakho groaned.

- Why do you need sleds?
- Why, it's already winter, soon the snow will fall, but I have nothing to ride on.

"You don't deserve a sled," Gvantsa intervened.

- Why so? Wakho twisted his face with a grimace.

Because you don't like to carry them.

- Up the hill, yes, I don't like it, but only up the hill. Pa, why is going down the hill on a sleigh more pleasant than going up it?

- Nellie's mother, intervene, please stop this nonsense, - Maka asked her mother-in-law.

"Because, son, a person is by nature a lazy creature, and if there is no urgent need for it, he tries to bother himself less and get more pleasure. Climbing a hill with massive sleds is far from easy work, but descending from it on a sled is a great pleasure.

- Yes, and that's why Vakho and his friend forced me to drag their heavy sledges up a slippery hill, and then they themselves sat in front, and they put me in the back, - Gvantsa complained.

- It can't be, - Mikhail exclaimed, - is it true, son?

Waho nodded his head in the affirmative.

"But girls can't carry weights," the daughter continued to complain. "They treated me like this.

- Yes, and when you threw me on the snow and started to feed me with it, was it good? - issued a response complaint Vakho.

- Well, enough, children, let's go to the table, otherwise breakfast is getting cold.

- How about fishing? You promised, pa, - Vakhtang pleaded.

- After breakfast, we will definitely go, and now everyone should wash their hands and go to the table, - Mikhail commanded. - Ladies, I'll quickly get firewood, otherwise there will soon be nothing to heat the stove, and you will feed the children by my arrival.

Returning, Mikhail found his children at a long table on the veranda.

The next winter day turned out to be sunny and warm for this time of the year, and the children were passionate about their favorite business with great interest. Vakhtang, experimented with two magnets and a small piece of iron moving between them.

It gave him great pleasure to observe the experiment, how a stronger magnet took away a metal ball from a less powerful one.

- Pa, look.

- Yes, son, well done, that he caught the main material law of life, which claims that the strong always defeat the weak and can take away all the blessings from him thanks to his strength. But I want you to remember the common truth: a person, if he wants to be called a person, has no right to do so. On the contrary, the

strong should help the weak, be compliant, this is exactly what distinguishes a person from animals, understand, son?

- Yes, pa, I know, just, I once again tried to understand the mechanics of the interaction of magnets.

Vakhtang showed his father a few more observations of magnets.

- Well done, son, you are my clever man, - the father praised his son.

- Here in the summer, for example, our neighbor burned snails with salt, I forbade him to do this, and he hit me for it, knocked me to the ground and told me not to interfere with him doing this.

- What did you do then?

- Mom said, and she scolded him for it.

- It is important to understand, children, that our nature must be loved and treated with care, in the same way it will then treat us.

- And the fact that we are now going to catch fish and then eat them, is that possible? Vakhtang asked.

- Well, we'll put them to sleep before that, so that they don't get hurt.

The boy thought.

- Well, what are you doing with such interest, daughter? - asked his father.

- Look, do you like it? - the daughter began to demonstrate the drawings burned on paper with the help of a magnifying glass and a sunbeam.

- Wow, look how great, my good fellow, and my mother saw them?

- No, - shook her head, Gvantsa.

- Well, then you need to show them to her urgently.

- Pa, well, let's go fishing, otherwise it will get dark early, and we will have to return home earlier, - the son pleaded.

- Okay, go ahead.

The men wanted to leave the house secretly, unnoticed by Gvantsa, but she cried and demanded to take her with her, and soon, putting on warm trousers and a windbreaker, she was catching up with the fishermen who had not gone far from the house.

The pebbles collected along a dirt road to a small artificial reservoir were thrown into the river by the children.

Flat pebbles, bouncing on the water surface, had time to bounce off its surface more than once before diving.

- Take care of the pebbles, children, it's better to try them on a calm pond after fishing, - Mikhail suggested, - but you could observe the principle of throws here too. So a person runs along the river of his life, some with the flow, and some against, and before plunging into another world, he manages to do more than one thing.

And you speed up, daughter, do not lag behind, otherwise you will get lost.

Throwing all the fishing tackle available with them, amateur fishermen began to wait for the first bites.

Mikhail, without ceasing, taught the children the tricks and secrets of fishing. Gvantsa turned out to be the luckiest of all. Her feminine flair overcame the enthusiasm of men.

- Try to throw it there, - Mikhail taught, - where the streams of the river flow into the reservoir, there are more fish that have not yet had time to hibernate. And as it gets colder and snow falls, then fishing will be closed until spring.

- Doesn't bite on bread, maybe try a worm? Vakhtang remarked despondently.

- Where can I get it now?

- I know where, - Gvantsa exclaimed like a real fisherwoman.

- And where?

- Not far away, I saw a small hill of manure, - the girl showed with her index finger.

"I won't dig into manure," Vakhtang said proudly.

- Well, then sit without fish, and we promised my mother to return with a catch.

- And I'll catch the fry, - Vakhtang suddenly realized.

- I won't give you my fry, - Gvantsa was capricious, - if you want, catch them on them yourself, but don't touch mine.

- All right, children, don't swear. Now we'll think of something, - Mikhail tried to reconcile the children.

He took from his backpack, pulp and vials of spices and flavored liquids, mixed everything with the pulp of white bread, added ground garlic to one lump, and vanilla and lemon juice to the other.

The restructuring was not long in coming. The fish went, but catching it required high skills.

The most attentive and observant Vakhtang, who, after several unsuccessful attempts, quickly caught all the tricks of catching, began to get more lucky.

The bites were mostly very cautious and weak.

- Why do they behave like that, want to eat and be so careful? Vakhtang asked.

"Well, they don't look like you when you pounce on food when you are hungry," Gvantsa quipped in response.

"Pa, tell her to stop taunting me," Vakhtang pleaded.

- Wa, and when I ask you not to do what I don't like, do you obey me? - the sister continued to argue with her brother.

"I'll throw her into the water now," Vakhtang got angry and, rushing to his sister and taking her by the clothes, began to drag her into the water by force.

- Paa, - Gvantsa cried.

Mikhail barely managed to separate and calm the quarreling children.

"You shouldn't have taken her with you," Vakhtang complained. - only nerves shakes and interferes with us.

But the more frequent bite was the best mediator in the dispute between brother and sister.

- Well, you see, children, how success does not come immediately, on the first try, but with experience and work.

- And experience, the son of difficult mistakes, and genius, friend of paradoxes - who said?

Vakhtang shrugged his shoulders, staring into the bouncing float.

"Pushkin," exclaimed Gvantsa joyfully.

"Well done," her father praised.

- Did Pushkin like fishing? - asked
eh she.

- Of course, - Mikhail agreed intuitively, not knowing whether this was the right answer, - what kind of person does not like fishing.

- Pa, look, another one got caught, - joyful Vakhtang pulled out another fish.

- And I pecked hard, - I didn't want to lag behind my brother Gvanets.

"Hat, you don't know how to catch, stay at home," continue to bite Vakhtang's sister.

- Success in fishing promises success in many other ways, children, - Mikhail continued to teach more than to fish. - To catch luck, just like success, to see it in time for another half of the case, as you see, daughter, you still need to fish it out onto the shore so that it does not jump off the hook and cut off your tackle, that is, your nerves. Because for successful fishing, as you can see, one or two measures are not enough, there is a whole complex of them, and all of them only together give the desired result. But, first of all, it is, of course, attentiveness, knowledge and speed of response, since the fish is far from being a stupid creature. For example, she even feels at a distance when the fishermen are coming.

- If they are so smart, then what makes them fall for the tricks of fishermen? - asked Gvantsa.

"Hunger, daughter, hunger and greed," Mikhail answered with a sigh. - and hope for a chance, as well as rivalry in skill.

- With a person? Vakhtang asked.

- Yes, it is possible that both arrogance and thoughts that they are more cunning than the fishermen who catch them. It's like a duel, who will win whom. They, having removed the bait from the hook at a higher speed than the speed of hooking the fisherman, seem to mock him, as if declaring: you are a burdock, and I am a champion. And you can even hear it if you keep your ears open.

- Dad, well, you pour. Wake up and help me, it's better, otherwise you see how the tackle was cut off by a broken fish, - the daughter complained.

"And you didn't hear how she taunted you," Vakhtang now quipped, happily pulling another victim ashore.

"Shut up and watch your tackle," his sister called back to him.

“If you don’t stop quarreling right now, then let’s go home,” Mikhail threatened.

- Better master the practice of catching fish, as this skill can be useful to you in many other matters.

- Who does not work, he does not make mistakes, and not only does not eat, - Gvantsa tried to justify herself.

- And whoever eats, he is obliged to work, and not only with his hands and feet, but also with his head, - added Mikhail. - Each person was born primarily for creative creation, and he, in the image and likeness of God, is also a creator. In any case, this potential is deeply embedded in each of us, and not to use this resource, but to spend life only idly, is the greatest crime.

“Father, look, and something is pecking on your back,” Gvantsa interrupted him, having managed, with her father’s help, to eliminate the cause of the breakage of the tackle.

- Fishing was already coming to an end, as the evening was approaching, and with it came the cold.

Amateur fishermen managed to catch up to three kilograms of medium-sized fish, suitable for both fish soup and frying.

However, Mikhail clearly understood that the lessons and experience that his children received during this fishing were more valuable than the number of catches.

- What to do with this additional branch from the auxiliary fishing rod, - Gvantsa asked.

- Stop, don't break it, daughter, - commanded the father.

- Why? - the daughter was surprised, - after all, fishing is over.

- Hmm, - Mikhail chuckled, - I don’t remember whether or not I told you about one biology lesson, when the teacher explained to us from what moment the monkey turned into a man.

- What? Vakhtang drawled in surprise. - what are you saying, what a monkey, we are the children of God, born by him and sent to the earth to atone for our sins.

Gvantsa widened her eyes at her father in surprise.

- That's right, children, of course it is, but now I want to draw your attention to another point, try to catch it.

- Well, what did this biology teacher tell you? I am also a teacher, a dropout herself.

- Do not judge the dead, son, you can only say good things about them or you can’t say anything at all.

- Well, finish talking, - Vakhtang could not stand it.

- So, every day the monkey was looking for long sticks to knock juicy banana fruits from the trees and enjoy them.

- What's surprising about that? Vakhtang chuckled.

“Wait a minute, have patience, let your father finish,” Gvantsa interrupted him.

- So, at one moment the monkey realized not to throw away the stick, the tool, but to carefully save it for the next cases when it would be useful for getting its food.

The idea is interesting, but this story still would not turn a monkey into a man.

- Great, - Vakhtang praised his father.

- But you must admit, children, that in such a step, that is, in the first comprehension, the first step on the path of turning a monkey into a man could appear.

- And in my opinion, this step could make the monkey just smarter, and no more, - Gvantsa tried to explain. But anyway, it's cool anyway.

“Wow, how many fish we caught,” Vakhtang boasted proudly, raising them to the tank with fish splashing in it. “The fish is very good, but mushrooms would have come up to it,” he dreamed.

- BUT where can i get them in winter? Gvantsa was surprised.

- The winter time of the year, it is far from winter yet, - Mikhail said after some thought.

“Don’t, father, you see, it’s already getting dark, it’s better to go home now,” suggested Gvantsa.

- Well, as you decide, otherwise you could look in the woods, - suggested the father.

- And what mushrooms can be there now? Vakhtang asked.

- Like what, honey agaric, oyster mushroom, tinder fungus, rowing, false honey agaric, - Mikhail tried to remember.

- Oh, how great, - Vakhtang clapped his hands, jumping up and down with joy.

According to the law of subordination of the minority to the majority, the trio of fishermen headed up the mountainous area covered with forest.

Their mushroom campaign lasted a little more than an hour. Mikhail, pleased that he taught the children to recognize mushrooms, was looking forward to dinner with such delicious delicacies today as mushrooms and fish.

And it is not known how long their "gribalka" would have lasted, if not an unexpected call from his wife.

- Misha, where are you still, are you going to return home?

- Let's go, Maka.

- Was it possible to keep children in the cold for so long?

- And we were under the sun all day and it was warm, wasn't it children? – Mikhail wished support from the children, holding out his mobile to them.

“We are fine, ma, we are already returning, we will soon be with a rich catch of fish and mushrooms,” Gvantsa shouted into the phone.

- Everything is fine with us, - Vakhtang shouted in support.

- Well, children, since mom is so worried, then we will return home in a shorter way.

After about half an hour of fast walking, the sound of horses was heard.

"Well, wait, who are they," a stern and commanding voice suddenly came from behind.

Mikhail involuntarily looked around, and the children with him.

- Gvantsa, Vakhtang, my children, run urgently to the dirt road, and then tell everything to your home and mother.

"No, we won't go anywhere without you," the frightened children burst into tears.

- Gvantsa, daughter, take your brother away, otherwise we will all be caught here, and there will be no one to tell mom anything, - Mikhail commanded, - run faster, and I will detain them here. - Drop bags and all excess cargo here and run.

"They're running away," came the voice of one of the mounted patrols.

"Now, we will catch up with them," the second voice comforted him.

- Let's see now, how will you catch up? - Mikhail mumbled under his breath and began frantically rummaging through backpacks full of live fish and mushrooms.

Not finding the necessary items in them, he began to fumble through the pockets of his padded jacket and happily felt several flat stones he had collected on the way to the reservoir.

The patrolman, spurring his horse, went to catch up with the children, and the second hurried to Mikhail.

Several stones flew towards the horseman chasing the children. One of them hit him in the head, and although he miraculously managed to stay in the saddle at the beginning, his lost balance caused his horse to stumble and throw off the rider.

- Bitch, throwing stones, hold him, Oleg, - the injured border guard shouted to his partner, covering his bloodied eyebrow with his hand.

Having connected all the spinning rods connected together, he tried to fight off the second armed rider attacking him, he answered with a warning automatic burst into the air.

- Hold this bitch, - the second border guard, thrown by a horse, arrived in time to help him.

They quickly threw Mikhail to the ground, put handcuffs on him and, beaten and exhausted, put him in the saddle for a couple with one of the patrolmen, taking away his mobile phone and breaking it.

Bloodied Mikhail, barely holding on to the saddle, was most worried about the children.

At the same time, he was sure that he did not violate any border.

- We will sort it out on the spot, - the border guard who suffered from him threatened.

"You could have hit him in the temple, and then I would have nailed you on the spot," the second border guard did not stop beating him with his fists from time to time.

"Eka," Maka roared, calling her cousin back.

- What's happened?

- Misha was taken away.

- How did they take it away, who?

- Border guards.

- What do you mean why? For what?

- Allegedly for violation of the border. Neighbors assure that the territory where he was taken is not under their control.

- And the children, where are the children? Eka was worried.

- The children are with me, they were also with him, but managed to escape.

The crying of children could also be heard on the telephone.

- Wait, let me think, now you won't come to you, this damned curfew.

- The children heard the shots, they could have killed him, - Maka burst into tears even more.

- Wait ahead of time to bury him. We need to better understand what happened. So, don't cry, otherwise you'll kill your children and your mother-in-law, it's better to comfort them as you can, understand? And I will immediately make a couple of calls to the right place, and I will arrive tomorrow morning.

"Okay," Maka agreed.

Neither during childbirth, nor at the loss of her parents, did Maka experience such severe bodily and mental pain that did not allow her to sleep even for a minute during the longest and most disturbing night of her life.

XXXVI

Political passions within the country began to gradually fade away after the recognition of the parliamentary elections by the European Union.

Multiple meetings of the opposing sides at the negotiating table with the participation of the leaders of the European Union did not bring the desired results for the opposition parties, they were asked to stop the rallies, enter the parliament, and put forward their demands there.

The tense political and social situation in the country was an echo of everything that was happening in the world. It seemed that the whole world was irrevocably rolling into a kind of tartar, and the destruction of mankind was inevitable. The threat of imminent death hung over him.

- Alexander, hello, dear, - a message came up on the messenger from a neighbor from the top floor.

- Hello, Zura, how are you, how are you?

- I feel better, but, in general, our general situation is catastrophically dangerous.

- Why not?

- Aliens are increasingly sending us alarming signals that if humanity continues to move in the same direction, it will destroy not only itself, but the entire planet, that paradise, earthlings, which was prepared for us and our good and peaceful living in it, by the Almighty.

- And what can we do with you, Zura, to prevent such a tragic scenario?

- Well, at least spread information via the Internet about the impending inevitable global catastrophe that awaits us, earthlings, and the entire planet, which humanity is capable of destroying with the help of nuclear weapons, not one, but several hundred times.

- Well, I will try to contribute to this not an easy task, but you, in turn, ask the humanoids to take pity on us and give us at least some respite.

"They'll give us something, but we don't give ourselves such a delay, Sandro, don't you understand?" This is the Apocalypse and the lost paradise, even if they manage to save our planet, then we, if we are lucky, will be able to observe it only from other planets.

- From Mars, or what?

- At least from Mars, but this is not yet known.

- It turns out that after the expulsion of us from heavenly paradise, now we will be expelled from paradise on earth?

- We ourselves expel Alexander and we ourselves lose this paradise.

- Well, Zura, I have to go to work, I understood everything and will act in this direction, - Alexander promised.

- You can even say that you received this information through me, a mediator and contactee with humanoids.

- Ok, I understood everything. Also for me, a half-checked mediator-contactee, - Alexander objected to himself.

- Well, you know that if they fly for me, then I will not leave you here alone to be torn apart by earthly life and I will definitely take you with me.

- Thank you for your concern and keep in touch. - (and to himself): That's just what I needed right now.

In continuation of communication with a neighbor, Alexander came across a video about the destruction of mankind, which warned that in a few decades people could disappear altogether as a species.

- So, you need to be in time, - a thought flashed through Alexander's head.

A video interview with a certain Mr. X was truly terrifying, suggesting that a new era of political geography might be coming in the future.

The artificial intelligence program in this video was assigned one of the leading roles, and the author's information that the exclusive videos that he releases and which are not beneficial to the elites are deleted and the channel is blocked.

The video said that the evolution of human development was in the direction of the concentration of power and wealth in one hand.

The purpose and meaning of the single ruler of the world, the owner of money, the total destruction of people.

Satellites with artificial intelligence will control everyone and everything through the implantation of microdevices into the bodies, with the aim of reducing the population in megacities, as their maintenance becomes economically inexpedient.

- Listen less to such tales, Sandro, but rather get down on the ground and think about real everyday issues, - Thea advised.

- You, for example, heard at least something about the notorious chemtrails, - Alexander continued his topic, ignoring Thea's advice.

- No, what the hell is this? Thea responded.

- This is a secret project of the world government, aimed at destroying the excess population of the planet, which consists in the fact that certain substances are sprayed from aircraft over the surface of the earth, causing fatal diseases in people. And the mass spraying of toxic aerosols into the atmosphere has long been made.

- Lord, what nonsense you are talking Alexander.

- So it's not me, but one of the YouTube channel bloggers.

- Well, then don't watch this nonsense of his, what, there are few other interesting programs on this site?

- Why nonsense?

- Yes, because if this has already been done in many countries for a long time, then why don't we see the mass destruction of people?

"Perhaps you are right," Alexander answered, "but it is still interesting to listen to such, even scary, fantasy!

- More interesting than seeing and listening to me?

- No, God forbid, of course not, - Alexander came to his senses.

- So, soon they will open the borders and resume flights, and in the summer I am going to fly back to my homeland, you would you wanted to see me?

"Of course, Thea, what's the question?" You know that very well.

- I don't know, maybe you already have someone?

- That's the devil, how she feels everything even at a distance, - Alexander thought.

- You know that I can perfectly feel the energy of another person.

- Emotional feelings and communication with a person based on it, this is the greatest gift given by the Almighty.

- I know. so what?

- Nothing! Come and feel everything yourself.

- Here I come. Will you meet?

- Of course, by all means, just know that when you fall into my arms, you will not be able to leave them.

"We'll see about that," Thea smiled back.

- And if something happens to our planet and we lose this paradise, then you will take me to Mars on Elon Musk's Starship interplanetary ship.

- Absolutely! I ordered tickets for the two of us a long time ago, and VIP, - Alexander promised with a smile.

- Look at me, just don't turn out later on your words. And now I have to leave you, running errands.

- Happy, dear, and all the best to you.

- Bye, - Thea casually threw, sending Alexander a kiss, once again, turning his whole soul from the inside.

For the first time in his life, he was in love with two women at the same time and often wondered in favor of whom he would make a choice if at the same time both were standing in front of him together.

March, as always, did not please the townspeople with the stability of the weather,.

Sudden warming abruptly gave way to cold weather, and long and often changing cloudy and rainy days seemed to return to the townspeople their debts for the past, rainless leap year.

- "Toyota" white, stop the car, - a voice was heard from behind, a voice from the loudspeaker.

- Oh, damn it, - the driver exclaimed, seeing in the side mirror the patrol car following him. - Well, where do I stop here, with such a busy traffic.

- White Toyota, turn right and stop the car.

- Yes, now, - the driver muttered, - let me get to the turn.

"Your documents," the officer of the patrol car asked, slowly approaching the driver. Why are you violating the rules of the road?

- What are the rules? I'm driving myself by inertia behind a column of cars, even if you really want to, you won't violate it," the driver objected.

- You violated the previous lap, the patrolman pointed out and began to prove to the driver that he was right.

The driver tried in vain to prove his innocence, but in the end he had to pay a fine of fifty lari.

With a rather spoiled mood, Alexander, with difficulty getting out of the traffic jam and buying a few scarlet roses, hurried to the place of the agreed meeting.

A tall blonde, wrapped in a white jacket, tried in vain to escape from the cold streams of the gusty wind.

- Finally, where are you so far? - the girl kissed the driver on the cheek, sitting down next to him in the front seat, - I was chilled by the wind.

- Just in case, put a mask on your face, Ketii, - Alexander advised.

- I thought you would come by taxi, whose car is this?

“Now it’s ours,” he shot her with his eyes.

- Truth? Where? Katie squealed with joy, clapping her hands, but then she seemed to break off suddenly, hanging her head.

- The older sister borrowed some of the money, and I bought it from the owner, almost new, do you like it?

- I like it, of course, but what about the rest?

- I will pay in stages.

- How?

- I’ll taxi.

- Well, yes, that’s just what you lacked.

- What, what’s bad?

Katie lowered her head again.

- Doctor of Sciences is a watchman, and now a taxi driver.

- What is the age, such is the poet.

- What beautiful roses, - Keti took the flowers in her hands, drowning in the aroma of their smell, - is this for me?

- Who else?

- I don’t know, do you?

- Where are we going, Katie, to yours or to me?

- To mine already, probably never, - Katie said sadly.

- Why? What happened?

“Everything is so simple and at the same time difficult in this life,” Katie sighed.

“But not with us, if you stay by my side, you won’t have any problems,”

Alexander assured.

- Truth? She buried her face in his shoulder.

- What’s wrong with you, baby, what happened?

“I was at the clinic yesterday,” Katie said with difficulty.

- What happened to you?

- I’m pregnant, Sandro. We will have a child.

- Truth? - Alexander happily asked again, barely having time to react and avoid a collision with the car in front.

Katie shook her head in agreement, holding back her tears with difficulty.

- Well, it’s wonderful, - Alexander exclaimed joyfully, enclosing the sobbing girl in his arms. - Yes, but you were protected as far as I know?

- This is just the beginning.

- And then?

- You really wanted a child.

- Of course, I wanted to, I only dreamed about this all my life, my little fool, but why are you crying then?

- My against, ordered me to abandon the child.

- What? - Alexander drawled, - well, it’s none of their business.

“Father said he would never allow our marriage.

- But why? Is it because of the age difference?

Katie nodded her head in the affirmative.

- I don't know Sandro, I'm so tired of all these worries, constant arguments and swearing with them. What will people say, our friends and relatives? Everything turned out to be not so simple.

- Yes you don't give a damn about who says what, isn't our desire and will more important?

- Yes, but sooner or later we will have to visit and also receive guests ...

- And what, is it shameful for you to be next to me in the status of a wife?

- No, but... I don't know, Sandro, but we have too little time to think, we need to make a decision quickly.

- I will not allow you to get rid of our child, - Alexander raised his voice, - in the end it is criminal both before God and before the church.

- Why are you yelling at me? Who gave you the right to do this? - as if in an instant, all the warm feelings for the beloved man broke in Keti. - I can't stand screaming at my mother from my father, and even more so I don't intend to listen to them from you addressed to me.

- Forgive me, dear, - Alexander softened his tone, trying to pull her back into his arms, - so I'm not talking about you, but about the opponents of our marriage and child.

- Leave me alone, you old fool, I shouldn't have contacted you, - Keti shot into Alexander's heart, jumping out of Alexander's car and slamming the cab door hard, she started running to the side.

Iron pain pierced Alexander's heart.

He suddenly involuntarily remembered the famous quatrain, the classic:

As if with iron

Soaked in antimony

You were cut

According to my heart.

There was no point in running after Katie now, and there was no strength left to stay in the car and wait for her painful self-torture.

Fortunately, the church was nearby, in which there was a service.

Church, the only good and saving haven for a believer, healing human souls and hearts.

Alexander with lit candles knelt and prayed before the holy icons of the Savior and the Virgin Mary. He found, to his shame, that he had never prayed so hard and with such passion as he did now.

Only the Church and God were now for him the only consolation and lifeline.

- It turns out, with what strong feelings, you need to go to the temple to the Lord God, pray and ask him for mercy and help, - Alexander began to comprehend.

The candles lit by him, left on the candlestick, burned out slowly and brightly.

How little it turns out to be one, even if divided love in life, - Alexander's thought drilled bitterly. How much good and at the same time destructive people can do to each other.

In the memory of Alexander, many sayings of the creator from the Holy Scriptures surfaced, and in particular words, with the power of a bell ringing:

"... And yes, love each other, as I fell in love with you!"

"Love, for the Almighty and for man, is a true paradise for a person, with the loss of which he loses his human appearance, mind and feelings, and is capable of any criminal atrocity," Alexander recognized in himself again, for the umpteenth time. Everything is back to normal!

Alexander experienced his second birth in the church 20 years ago, but now, as it seemed to him, the question of his life and death was being decided, but earthly death, he wanted to experience it in the same place and from where he began his real full life, hoping for God's mercy, the forgiveness of all their worldly sins and the repose of the soul in the Kingdom of God.

At the other end of the temple, the cry of a newborn child was suddenly heard - a symbol of new life.

- May you be more lucky than me, - Alexander admonished.

XXXVII

Closer to the summer following the leap year, in many European countries, mass vaccination of the population made it possible to gradually open both land borders and flights between countries, giving people hope for the return of the past pandemic-free life.

But the speed of vaccinations, as well as its volumes, proceeded differently in different countries against the backdrop of frequently flaring mass demonstrations against the restrictive measures caused by the pandemic.

A restless mother's heart constantly takes care of children. In addition to love for children, he is distinguished by such qualities as the desire to constantly be near them, take care of their health, desire for peace, hope for the future and faith in the final victory of good.

The sharpness of these maternal qualities are not able to reduce, time and distance.

The only positive factor capable of at least a little mitigation was the Internet, with the help of which you can almost every day communicate via video link with your children who are away from their mothers. And every positive news from children is an additional joy and prolongation of the mother's life.

And now, once again, the long-awaited answer via Skype call made the mother's heart beat in a special way.

- Natia, daughter, why did you not answer my calls for so long, you were online, did something happen?

- No, everything is fine, mom, I'm sorry, I was just talking to a friend.

- How are you, what's new?
- Nothing, mom, but what can be good in our country during a pandemic? We sit at home, school, friends, and all life only through the Internet.

- Be patient a little more I think that after universal vaccination life will get better.

- Yes, no problem, we have long been accustomed to this way of life.

"I hope you and Shochiko take precautions when you leave the house?"

"Mom, don't bother yourself, we are doing everything we need," the daughter assured. And then, try not to comply, we have constant monitoring of all violators of anti-pandemic measures, they are fined.

"Hi, Mom," the son joined in the conversation.

- Hello, son, how are you, no one offends you?

- No, Mom, it's okay. Natia and Aunt Nora do everything for me.

- And you for them?

And I also try to be helpful to them.

- With what?

- Look at the pictures with nature views I have collected from plastic puzzles, they are now hanging on our walls.

- Well done, my good boy, I ask you, son, obey Natia and Aunt Nora in everything, okay?

- Well, mom, - Shotiko agreed, - but I don't always agree with Natia when she slips me the wrong puzzles.

"Heh heh," Julia smiled.

Listen to me carefully, I'll tell you.

Imagine this big box of puzzles as life itself with different people, each of whom will come in handy in due time and will do their job both for themselves and for others.

Each person, like your puzzle, has its own purpose and time. And only by uniting them can integrity and unity be achieved, through the effort of which one can come to success. Therefore, it is very important that you all - both you and Natia. and Aunt Nora, would be together all the time and would act together, and would go towards the same goal together.

- And dad? Shochiko interrupted.

"And dad too, of course," Julia agreed with difficulty after a short pause, refusing to divulge the secret of her relationship with her husband to the children.

- Hello, daughter, - it was Nora's turn, - how are you?

"Thank you, Aunt Nora, thank God I don't have any economic need," Julia explained. - And what's new with you, Aunt Nora, my children do not bother you much, do they obey you?

- Of course, daughter, I have almost no problems with them, they are so obedient and accommodating, only I worry about them because of Shotiko's studies and it seems that Natia has a fan at school.

- Yes...? - Julia said with surprise, - this is news. Why didn't she tell me about it? Well, give it to me again, I'll ask her about it.

- Don't, daughter, I beg you, let's not embarrass her, I completely control her.

- Well, - Julia agreed with difficulty, - aunt, I only ask you very much, in case of any problems, please let me know. You know that I have no one but you, you are my life, and I also live only for you, and only for you.

- I know, daughter, I know, calm down, everything will be fine, I promise you.

- Thank you very much, my dear, what would I do without you?

- And we would be without you? Aunt smiled back. - We all need each other, and this applies not only to the living, but also to ties with relatives and close people who have left us. The memory of Khatia and Khvich and the incurable pain will remain forever in our hearts.

- Yes, aunt, of course, this pain is in my soul, a heavy stone block, with which we will now have to live for the rest of our lives. I spoke with Aunt Leah about this and expressed my pain and condolences to her.

"And one more request from me, daughter," aunt dropped with a sigh. - I'm sorry to interfere in your personal affairs. But your husband haunts me and constantly asks me to ask you to talk to him, because he wants to explain himself to you.

"No, aunt, I beg you, do not interfere in our relations," she sharply rejected the request.

Boo Julia. - We after all discussed this question and I do not want to return to it any more. If he so wants, let him contact me and explain himself.

- I did not know about your quarrel, otherwise I would have tried to settle your relationship earlier.

- Now, I'm afraid they won't settle down.

- What are you saying, daughter, how is it that he is your husband? aunt was amazed.

- My? I already doubt it.

- How so?

- Every person in the world has rights and obligations, don't they?

- Undoubtedly!

- And what rights and obligations, even if elementary, does a husband have?

- Well ..., this is basically known to everyone.

- So, let him think about these questions and about his behavior.

- But he begs you to give him the opportunity to explain himself to you.

"We'll see," Julia said coldly, "although I confess to you that I'm pretty tired of his fables.

Against the backdrop of recent events in her house, Lidia Ivanovna went to the hospital with a heart attack and there, with the help of leading cardiologists, she fought for her life.

"Mom, forgive me for everything," Julia begged her, sitting on the edge of her hospital bed and holding her hand in hers.

"Nothing, daughter," she reassured her in turn. - Kostya explained everything to me, and here I had a lot of time to think about many things, including about you and your relationship.

Julia silently listened to her mistress.

- By and large, I'm to blame for everything, - admitted Lydia Ivanovna.

Julia was surprised by her statement.

- I'm to blame, because at one time, probably, I invested in him too much attention, affection, nurturing in him more feminine qualities than masculine ones. My husband warned about this and said that I was spoiling him with this, but you know the mother's heart ... And then I was always convinced that love, kindness and humanity are always stronger and more justified than male rudeness and strength. Let everything be as it is, and as he wishes it, on his part, and only your daughter can make the decision.

Julia smiled back.

- But know that I will approve and accept now, any decision that you make together. And men, in fact, are the weakest creatures, much weaker than we are, if only because they peck at our feminine energy, at the soul signals that spontaneously radiate from our hearts and souls. Well, perhaps it was in ancient times, in which, as they say, a man and a woman were one creature? But after they were separated, peace left them forever, a constant, long and difficult search for kindred souls began. But you know, I am deeply convinced that if your soul had not touched his soul even with the edge of the wing, he would not have fallen for you like that.

- I don't even know, Mom, what did he see in me? Julia smiled.

He doesn't know, I'm sure. No one knows this, this is the mystery of the soul, which does not want to tell even its owner about it. How amazingly, colorfully and mysteriously our life is arranged, and the more beautiful and attractive everything that happens in it is.

The most precious thing that a woman can give to her beloved man is not so much beauty, mind, body, success and more, but above all his special masculine state, to which a man will always be drawn to, like a magnet. This is the law of energy exchange between a man and a woman, between the energies of yin and yang. And no one is able to resist this law, since this is an absolutely senseless undertaking.

Lidia Ivanovna ran her hand over the scars of the cuts on Julia's hands.

- Physical wounds are overgrown, and thank God, but the pain of the soul, probably not?

"Thank God it's all over now, but promise me it won't happen again, promise?"

Julia nodded her head in agreement.

- Never buy into your life, henceforth, do you hear? This is one of the biggest mortal sins that a person can commit. What about the police? Lidia Ivanovna asked.

- Konstantin settled everything, although it cost him a pretty penny.

- It's nothing, the main thing is that everything ended well.

- If this case did not damage your health, mother.

"Nothing, we'll get out somehow," Lidia Ivanovna hastened to console.

"I will probably never be able to atone for my guilt before you," Julia sighed.

- You can, daughter, you can, if something happens to me, look after him properly, please.

- Nothing will happen to you, Kostya and I spoke with the doctors, they assure us that you will recover soon and return home.

- His children are on their own, - Lidia Ivanovna continued, - as it should be in principle. They grow up and leave, and next to a man there should be his beloved woman and vice versa, next to the woman there should be a beloved man. After the loss of my husband, I sharply felt that my soul was killed, and nothing ages a person like mental pain. It is not for nothing that it is said that the age of a person is calculated not by the number of days lived, but by the amount of pain that haunts him all his life.

- Forgive me, but the time of your visit, unfortunately, has expired, - a young nurse, in a white medical coat, who entered the ward, warned. I earnestly ask you to leave the patient," she turned to J. hives.

"Okay," Julia agreed.

- Take care of him, I ask you, just as you looked after me, look after him.

A tear fell from Julia's eyes.

- Promise! was her last word in parting.

Later, standing in the arms of Constantine, Julia listened to his declarations of love.

"You know, I have long wanted to apologize to you for my first steps in our relationship," Konstantin began in an undertone. Believe it or not, I wouldn't have touched you with a finger if you hadn't sunk into my soul so deeply.

- I know, Kostya, I know, - Julia answered with confidence. "I have a heart and a soul too.

"Why didn't you tell me about this before, or at least gave me some kind of sign.

- Why? Sooner or later, it would have happened anyway, wouldn't it? Julia turned to Konstantin.

"Yes, but all the same, in my soul I feel some kind of guilt before you," he hugged her gently.

"Don't blame yourself," Julia consoled him, "in life, what should happen almost always happens, it's another matter when it happens against our will, and we regret it, but for this we are given time and a chance to correct our actions."

- Do you regret what happened? He pushed her by the shoulders.

- I regret that partly through my fault, my mother ended up in the hospital and that I brought you so much trouble and expense in the police.

"But you are now next to me," Konstantin asked with a plea.

- You know very well that in my homeland, my husband and children.

I also have a wife and children. However, I am soon divorcing my wife, and this is my final decision.

Are you asking me to divorce you too? She looked straight into Konstantin's eyes.

- No, I do not call you to this.

- And how then? Julia asked.

- I do not know.

- Let's finish this meaningless conversation, I'm very tired, I worry about this all the time.

- If you want, I will never touch you again, just don't deprive me of one thing, I beg you.

- What? she asked him with a look.

- Enclose you in my arms and love and care for you like no one has ever done for anyone!

Constantine hurried to wrap her in his tender embrace, and Julia felt his body tremble, vibrate and plead, as if in fear of losing her forever.

- Hmm, - Julia's friend admitted, - with men, whatever you say, we have the same problems.

And what do they want from us? – remarked Thea, - physical intimacy? Yes, for God's sake, now the sex industry is at such a level that everywhere there are a lot of rubber dolls for every taste.

"If only it were that easy," Julia sighed.

- I'm joking, my friend, I myself am tormented by similar feelings, you know.

- Oh, how many who know how to live, and how few live happily.

- In any case, I think that you should not give up on yourself, especially since, according to one astrologer, each person reincarnates and comes into this world seven times in turn, a woman and a man.

Julia smiled involuntarily in astonishment.

- What would you do if you came a second time as a man? she asked her friend.

"Uh," she said in amazement. Are you still asking? Of course, I would have fucked all the men who had already come as women, for their sinful deeds and adventures from past lives!

- Cruel and vindictive! Julie concluded with a smile.

- An eye for an eye!

- Okay, girlfriend, enough of us, probably fooling around with you - you will soon fly away to your homeland, and I have to stay here alone, - Julia remarked with regret.

- Why one, and Konstantin? It's just a pity that there is such a difference in age between you.

- What about age, Thea? Just numbers that don't mean anything.

It is more difficult to differentiate yourself in parts, to compare him and my husband.

"You said you were done with him, didn't you?"

"Either with him or with me," Julia said thoughtfully.

- Jonah will have time to return to your departure?

I don't know, he promised he would try.

- How much I would give now to fly with you to your homeland.

- Aida, what's stopping you? Thea exclaimed with joy.

- What! What! yes, absolutely everything.

- Labor created man, - the voice of Thea's father-in-law singing a foreign melody was suddenly heard.

- Oh ... - what kind of guests we have, Doris, just look, - Zeus was delighted, putting the bags on the table in the living room.

- Hello, girls, I'm glad to see you together again, - greeted Doris, who entered after her husband. "We just got out of our area, now we'll put ourselves in order and sit down at the table," she suggested.

- No thanks, I'm in a hurry.

- Where, Julia, Konstantin is unlikely to have returned home, and Lydia is still in the hospital, what will you do at home alone? By the way, how is she? Lydia?

- Thank you, it's better, the doctors promise her a speedy recovery.

- Here, girls, I'll tell you, - added Zeus, who entered the house with a new batch of bags. - Physical labor not only created a person, but it also ennoble him, it's not for me to teach you this, but repetition is the mother of learning. A person must be constantly busy, if only so that all sorts of stupid and bad thoughts do not enter his head.

Julia and Thea looked at each other in surprise.

- For it is not in vain that it has been shown by one intelligent person that any useful labor is the most effective medicine on earth.

- Zeus, what kind of nonsense are you talking again and powdering the girls' brains, you better go wash your face and then help me in the kitchen.

- Have to go wash your hands, and then help in the kitchen, - Zeus accepted the command.

Soon, at the evening table, Zeus demonstrated all his half-forgotten art of seducing his dear ladies.

Over time, toasts and table conversation were replaced by folk songs of the two countries, including:

My good country, "
What made you sad,
If in the present you are not lucky,
Our future is illumined!...

ჩემო კარგო ქვეყანავ,
რაზედ მოგიწყენია!..
აწმყო თუ არა გვწყალობს,
მომავალი ჩვენია..."

Riko, joyfully spinning among the household, began to bark to the beat of all the songs performed by the hosts of the feast, joyfully rising on her hind legs.

Returning home, while waiting for Konstantin, Julia remembered the envelope with the letter given to her, Lidia Ivanovna, with parting words, so that she would give it to her son to read.

"No matter how your future life turns out and no matter what decision you make, as a mother, I cannot help but share with you some of the thoughts of much wiser and more enlightened people about our life," Lidia Ivanovna instructed Julia, handing her a sealed envelope .

- I would call them the wisdom of the universe and the foundation of the universe, which is much more important and correct than the earthly one.

Julia decided to read the letter with Konstantin, but female curiosity won. And then let Kostya read it separately.

- So, what is the wisdom of the universe? - said Julia, opening a piece of paper enclosed in an envelope.

The soul never dies...

Days, years, centuries pass like a shadow, and we are all approaching our end. The life of any person is a book, and every day of life is one of its pages. Every book has an end, and so does human life.

On the pages of this book there is both bad and good, both light and dark deeds of a person are recorded. And when life ends, then this book will be opened before God, on the basis of what is written in it, a person will give an answer.

Let us pray in such a way that when we leave this life, we will not have serious sins, and if they remain, then they will not be big and not serious.

Of course, then the prayers of the Church at the Liturgy, memorial services, alms, prayers of loved ones, so that for the smallest sins, will be of great help to us - after all, who is without sins! to receive forgiveness from God. The greatest danger to salvation is mortal sins, and there are a lot of such sins.

However, if we lead a mindful life, we are free from such sins. So a person prone to illness, if he often visits a doctor and follows his recommendations, then he preserves his health. But if he neglects visits, he will harm his health.

Therefore, by frequently visiting a spiritual doctor, we keep the health of our soul, which is more valuable than the whole world.

After all, the whole world is not worth one immortal soul! The world passes, but the soul never dies.

Elder Ephren (Moraitis)

Endure everything, thank God for everything - you will always be calm in spirit.

Rev. Joseph of Optina Julia, reading and comprehending the wisdom of the universe, gradually fell into a dream after an eventful day, with faith and hope for a time that, it seemed to her, was better than she could solve all the tasks facing her.

Lost heaven,
He is for everyone,
For someone he is there
Plenty of everything where he is,

For others, he is here
Where to be born and live
Him God once
It was destined to be a gift!

Lost heaven,
Paradise of Adam and Eve.
We would like to return it
Life would not prevail!

And what is paradise for you, my dear reader, and is it lost by you, when and how?

One of the most leading computer companies in the country, showed an act of great humanity and piety and paid all bank debts, Vano, as well as transportation, burial of his body and arrangement of his grave, where his colleagues gather annually, on his birthday, to honor his memory .

Thanks to repeated international negotiations at the government level, Mikhail was released from captivity a year later.

Bezhan, thanks to his connections with people from a high political environment, was elected a member of parliament from the ruling party, which further strengthened and increased his standard of living.

Alexander and Keti, unexpectedly for everyone, got married and Keti managed to fulfill Alexander's sacred dream by giving birth to twins, a girl and a boy.

The many years of work of Alexander and Mikhail in the Internet business were finally crowned with success and they received expensive shares of the brand holding corporation and for a long time, if not for the rest of their lives, secured their complete financial well-being.

Thea managed to cope with her illness and completely recovered.

But the family, which she destroyed because of her love for Alexander, could not be restored, and therefore she began to live with her daughter's family and with pleasure took up the upbringing of her beloved granddaughter.

Fortunately, the accumulated money from working abroad fully provided her large family with a financially carefree life.

Julie I continued my work as a nurse abroad, but she also had to get used to the role of the mistress of Konstantin, the son of a sick woman whom she cared for.

The country, having finally received a new coalition government, began an irreversible movement forward at a rapid pace, restoring hope for a brighter future to its citizens.

**Georgia, Tbilisi
2020-2021**

სამსონ გელხვიძე

დაკარგული სამოთხე

(რომანი)

თბილისი, 2022

Самсон Гелхвидзе

ПОТЕРЯННЫЙ РАЙ

(Роман)

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- Natela Prokofievna Javakhishvili.

And also to the author's favorite melodies, under the light sounds of which this novel was written and this book was created.

The cover and title page of the book are based on photographs taken from the Internet.

The author expresses his gratitude to all those readers who had the patience and time to read this novel to the end.

And also the author apologizes to the reader for not being able to fully and fully convey the whole gamut and palette of feelings as well as his favorite melodies would have done in his place.

Samson Gelkhvidze - links list

to literary editions of the author

<https://proza.ru/avtor/alekssandr>

<https://stihi.ru>

1. COLLECTIONS OF POEMS AND POEMS:

1.1 The sacrament of confession or confession in verse

<https://proza.ru/2019/05/04/407>

1.2 Pain and Faith

<https://proza.ru/2019/05/04/73>

1.3 The soul longs for the Word

<https://proza.ru/2019/05/04/86>

2. STORY BOOK:

2.1 Pain merchants

<https://proza.ru/2019/05/04/515>

2.2 Return

<https://www.litmir.me/bd/?b=645232>

2.3 Winds of change

<https://proza.ru/2019/05/04/79>

3. NOVEL:

3.1 Nightingales of the monastery garden

<https://proza.ru/2019/05/04/113>

3.2 Budapest Moonlight Sonata

<https://proza.ru/2019/05/04/59>

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In 1975 he graduated from the 9th secondary school in Tbilisi and in that the same year he entered the Georgian Polytechnic Institute Faculty of Civil Engineering, graduated with honors in 1980 year in the specialty "Industrial and civil construction".

In 1989 he defended his PhD thesis.

In 2006 awarded the degree of Doctor of Technical Sciences.

From 1980 to the present day, he has been working in various educational institutions and research institutes of the Academy of Sciences of Georgia. He is the author of many scientific papers and inventions.

He began to take his first steps in poetry and prose in 1984.

In 2002, the first collections of short stories and poems were published. S. Gelkhvidze "Dealers in Pain" and "The Sacrament of Confessions, or confession in verse.

In 2004, a collection of short stories "Return" was published, and in 2005 year a collection of poems and poems "Pain and Faith" and the first author's novel: Nightingales of the Monastery Garden.

In 2014, the author's second novel, "Moonlight Sonata Budapest".

In 2015, a collection of poems and poems by the author "The soul strives for the word" and a collection of short stories "Wind of Change".

The author's third novel is offered to the readers' judgment "Paradise Lost". 2021 year.