



ОБЛАВА

No, eating...

No, smoking...

КОМАНДЫРОВ

plan to go for clothes in India.

DABU RED

UNDERWEAR

FOR YOU VASILY
МИЛАН КУДЕРА

У Василя неприятности,
он в зоопарке

ЗАДЕРЖКА

ТОВАРА ИЗ НЕПАЛА

MARI JEE

Chapter 4. Part One. Inside.

For the first time in the last ten years I haven't been stoned for three days. It's my third day of a crystal clear, inflamed mind. I have no craving for anything that would get me high. My brain processes different options for getting out of this dead end, working at maximum speed. It seems like my brain is about to freeze, like an overloaded computer. Something has to be done. I have been denied a lawyer and a phone call, yet I am not accused of anything. What am I doing here? It's been three days since I've touched food – I have no appetite. The guards are starting to worry about me. The smiling guard brought me a cigarette and told me I would get it if I ate. I had to force myself to eat some rice with spicy dal sauce. I eventually managed to take a shower using a plastic bottle to get some warm water out of the tap and pour it all over myself with one hand. The heat is still excruciating. The gods must have joined forces to torture me to death for my sins. Only two weeks ago I bought a new expensive air conditioner for my house. I wish I had it here now. My overheated brain refuses to think about anything. I've been staring at mold on the wall for a few hours. I get brought out of my coma-like state by some familiar Russian speech. If it isn't Psyu, if it isn't crazy Psyu! How did she get here? Her loud blabbermouth voice is hard to mistake for anybody else's. Psyu is a long-term junky. She's been on cocaine for the last ten years or so; which is nothing out of the extraordinary, considering that her husband is the number one drug dealer in Goa. It is virtually impossible to talk to her about anything; you can only listen to her non-stop monologue of nonsense. Yet now it sounds to me like the voice of hope. You always hear her first, then see her.

“Psyu, how did you find out I got arrested?!”

“How? Your ex-wife called me from Thailand and told me you were in trouble. Somebody told her; I'm not sure who it was. I've bought you toothpaste and underwear. Now tell me, what happened?”

“Psyu, it looks like I'm in big trouble, I would even say, in deep shit.”

Chapter 4. Part Two. Outside.

“Dymkov, it looks like we're in trouble.”

“What now, Vasya, are GosNarkoKontrol after you again?”

“No, everything seems to be alright with them, although they are also a pain in the ass. Yesterday there was a good party in the club. Besides us, it was sponsored by another company that sells cannabis-flavored beer called Hemp.”

“Vasya, why are you telling me about the party. I was there last night, we had a good crowd in.”

“Dymkov, you left earlier, as usual, and later on that night the GosNarkoKontrol people visited us. Undercover cops were chasing me around the club all night. Wherever I went, they were after me. I didn't smoke a single joint all night. Towards morning they detained two of my friends. Thank God, they

didn't have anything illegal on them. They interrogated them for two hours, asking questions about me. They asked them who I was and how long they had known me. They asked them if I was a drug dealer and so on and so forth."

"You should be more careful, Vasya. Are you still growing hydroponics¹ on your balcony?"

"Do you take me for a fool, Dymkov? I stopped doing it right after our store opened. I gave all the equipment to my friends. Now I get a share of the harvest. It's not much, but it's enough for my personal use. That's not the problem. We have sold almost all of the summer collection, and the new fall delivery is delayed."

"It's good that everything has been sold, but what's the problem with the new delivery?"

"Three months ago we had to return our winter collection because everything that had been shipped to us was defective."

"What do you mean, defective? Had they been smoking at the factory?"

"I don't know. They promised to redo everything in three to four months."

"Three to four months? Have they lost their minds? Who's going to need it in three months? People buy clothes for the upcoming season in advance. Our rent is five thousand dollars a month. We'll go bankrupt while they are redoing it."

"That's what I'm saying. We are in trouble."

"Trouble? I'd say we're in deep shit! What sort of contract did you conclude with them? Who is going to take responsibility for the delay with the collection?"

"I did warn you, Dymkov, that it's a new business and it's risky. Our suppliers totally understand this and they have refused to take responsibility for the term of the delivery. It's also a new business for them. They told me upfront: 'If you want to buy it – do; if not – don't!' So there is nobody to put the blame on; we'll have to think of something ourselves. But I think I have found a way out of this. Yesterday I spoke to an old friend who had just returned from India. He said that there is hemp merchandize everywhere in India."

"Yeah, I know their hemp merchandize: Manali charas and Kashmiri hashish, we'll get locked up for fifteen years for that kind of trade."

"No, he said it's clothes and accessories, all made out of hemp."

"Have you ever been to India, Vasya? They say it's dirty, with disease everywhere."

"I've always wanted to visit India but I've never had an excuse to go before."

"So why don't you go? The only thing is, who will manage the store?"

"Don't worry, my wife is pretty smart, she'll fill in for me while I'm gone."

1 Hydroponics – a subset of hydroculture and a method of growing plants using mineral nutrient solutions, in water, without soil.