



Эй, ты обезьяна!
Мне нужен доктор,
госпиталь...

от 10 до
20...

КАТАМ

Хорошее
Начало у моего
путешествия...

Mari Tee

Chapter 6. Part One. Inside.

I could definitely use some sleep now, but my brain just won't switch to relaxation mode, like a broken record it's repeating: "From ten to twenty, from ten to twenty." Blood is pulsing in my head. I've got to do something. What do Russian inmates do when the cops harass them? In my childhood I heard stories from my older friends about inmates slitting their wrists. Back then I couldn't understand what they did it for. But now I'm coming to realize why. Should I do it, too? I'd be able to get some sleep in the hospital. Tomorrow they will take me to the court for the first time. A suicide attempt would impress the judge. This is bullshit! I didn't have any drugs at home! I may be able to explain to the judge that my case has been falsified. I could tell the judge that I slit my wrists because I saw no way out of this situation. But what can I use to do it? I probably won't be able to chew my wrist with my teeth. There is a good chance of finding something in the trash lying on the floor. I'm lucky again! A small piece of tin that used to be a stand for mosquito coils, rusty and dirty, is sitting in the middle of the trash pile. But, I don't intend to die. And this piece of tin must be home to all known bacteria, from syphilis to hepatitis. Although, I must admit that syphilis and hepatitis are still better than ten years in jail. I need to try and sharpen this thing. The concrete floor, polished by the bare feet of inmates over the course of many years, is an ideal whetstone. My small knife looks more like a fragment of a saw with rare teeth. A few moments later, I'm still looking at my veins, hesitant to touch them. But, like a damaged hard drive, my brain keeps repeating: "From ten to twenty." I need to go for it. I must. My skin won't cut; it tears. It is strange indeed that I don't feel any pain. First, second... now the fifth cut. With every strike, my brain calms down a little. A vein finally appears in my split-open skin. Another few strikes and thick red liquid starts to pour from my vein, pulsing to the sound of my heartbeat.

"Hey you, monkey!" I shout to the sleeping guard through the bars. "I need a doctor, hospital," I show him my bleeding arm.

The sleepy guard slowly starts to realize that I have just caused him some trouble. The expression of his face tells me he is not too worried about the blood on my arm. He must be visualizing being reprimanded for falling asleep while on duty and letting a foreigner make a suicide attempt. The blood is starting to clot, becoming a thick wound. I have to act fast, or else I won't be taken to the hospital.

"Doctor! Hospital! I am khatam1!!!" I start to shout, lying on the floor pretending to be having a fit.

Reaching for his cell phone, the guard starts justifying himself into it. The sleepy person on the other end interrupts him and starts to shout loudly, accusing him of all sins.

"Ok, ok, sir," the guard finishes the conversation, looking at me threateningly. "In fifteen minutes they will take you to the hospital. You got me in a load of trouble now. I won't get my bonus and it's likely that I'll be punished. Did you hear my boss shouting?"

"Oh, it's you who's in trouble is it? What do you need money for? You're guarding my cell all the time. You get food and clothes for free, and your salary is enough to buy booze. I am the one who is in trouble here. I am looking at ten years. And my family is left without money, who is going to feed them?"

Pouring some water over my open wound, I see the blood running down my arm again. My blood streams down onto the concrete floor, mixing with water and forming patterns. I'm sure I've seen this picture before somewhere.

1 Khatam – 'done', 'over', 'end' (Hindi).

Chapter 6. Part Two. Outside.

Blood is pouring all over the curb, down to the sewer, where it becomes a dirty pink liquid. I am standing a few yards away from my hotel, dazed and confused by what I have just seen. I have just watched an old man begging for money, cough and fall down on the ground. His coughing immediately turned into the roaring of an animal. Dark red clots of blood started coming out of his mouth. And there he lies with glass eyes and blood streaming out of his mouth. For the first time in my life I am watching somebody die in front of my eyes. I stand paralyzed, not knowing how to react to this. Passers-by are knocking into me with their shoulders, elbows and bags. Nobody is paying any attention to the man lying in a puddle of blood. I reach out for the sleeve of a salesman in the store across the street, pointing at the corpse. Without expressing any astonishment or fear, the salesman looks at the dead man and calmly concludes: “Khatam.” What a wonderful country, where nobody pays any attention to a man that has just died on the street. What a nice start to my journey! It is strange that not only are the locals not paying attention to the person lying in a puddle of blood, but the tourists aren’t either. Trying not to look into each other’s eyes, they hurry on. Wearing weird clothes, the white-skinned tourists remind me of medieval characters. Simple, one-size-fits-all pants and plain, collar-less shirts. I get the feeling that they all want to look like locals. Only the huge rucksacks on their backs give them away as tourists. Out of the whole flow of people, I am the only one who looks like he just arrived yesterday. I should get rid of my trendy velvet pants. Compared to the simple clothes that other tourists, wear I must look like a millionaire.