



Mari Tee

PLAY

ДЕЛОМ ЧТО ХОЧЕШЬ ТОЛЬКО НЕ МЕШАЙ ДРУГИМ

Свобода мелькает за окном...

такая жизнь не для меня...

foreigner, foreigner, Russian!

Я влюбляюсь в эту страну... Ну... Свобода среди нищеты намного лучше, чем рабство среди гламура

Go transfer Marisa back up jail

## *Chapter 10. Part One. Inside.*

Today I will be transferred to another prison. I recollect scenes from movies where the main character gets locked up and continues struggling for his life and for justice to prevail. It's weird; I never thought I'd end up in prison. Every time I had to do something illegal, I would find out what it would cost me beforehand. What do I know about prison? From the childhood stories told by my neighborhood friends' older brothers, I know that a lot of unwritten laws exist. I know that the weak and the 'bitches' sleep by the toilet. I know that you shouldn't have anything to do with the bitches, otherwise you'll be made into a bitch yourself and will be sent to live by the 'can'. According to my friends' brothers, the life of the bitches is hell. They are called 'roosters' and play the role of slaves. They are raped, beaten, and forced to wash everybody's clothes and mop the toilets. No, that kind of life is not for me. I need to find the piece of metal that I used to slit my wrists; I may need to use it as a knife. What is waiting for me in the new prison? I must behave appropriately right from the beginning. If anything happens, I'll smack whoever it is in the face without thinking about the consequences. What if the only vacant space is by the toilet? I'll have to find the weakest person in the cell and make him move. Are these really my thoughts? What have I become? Who am I? I must calm down; everything will be alright. I will succeed in everything. Having found the piece of metal with stains of blood from my veins in the pile of trash, I hide it inside the sole of my rubber sandal.

"Vasiliy, ready! Go transfer, Mapusa Lock Up Jail," an Indian guard shouts, opening the door.

At last, to get away from this hell. I climb into a small Mahindra car, a caricature of a Jeep, and drive into the unknown, with freedom shimmering through the windows. What is freedom? Everyone has their own definition: for some, it is synonymous with pleasure that is obtainable upon request. For others, it is the ability for unrestricted movement. So what is my definition of freedom? What have I been deprived of? I'm coming to realize that for me freedom is being able to be close to my loved ones. How's life treating my girls? My daughter, Vasilinka, and my wife, Lena? They must be going out of their mind at the news about me. What an idiot I am. To hell with the psychedelic revolution. Who needs it? Those idiots that have surrounded me lately? Evolution of perception, a quantum leap, freedom, independence... Did they ask me to alter their consciousness? Do I know the meaning of these beautiful words? Did they want freedom as much as I want it now? I'll probably have to explain to my baby why she can't go back to school this year, because we have no money. What an idiot I am!

"We're here, get out," the guard says, slowly opening the back door of the car.

A one-story Portuguese building with a brick roof and a facade surrounded by chiku and mango trees growing around it. Iron bars instead of doors. Approaching the entrance, I recall crazy Psyu's instructions: "You can barely speak English, that is your biggest advantage for the court. And don't sign anything without me or your lawyer." The jail warden, a five foot tall Indian with a strong body and faggy voice, asks me in English: "Sir, do you understand where you are?"

"I don't speak English."

"You are in jail, do you have anything illegal on you?"

"I don't speak English."

"This Russian, just like all the rest, doesn't seem to understand a word I am saying. Search him and bring in his stuff."

A guard takes a pile of dirty laundry, a metal plate, a mug and half a bar of soap out of the locker.

“Here’s a towel. Wrap it around you, take off all your clothes and sit down on the floor,” the guard explains to me with gestures.

An Indian inmate that has just been brought in is doing the same thing. Having refused to sit down on the floor for some strange reason, he gets slapped so severely that he falls over. A small bag of tobacco drops out from between his legs. The guard slaps him again a few times and throws his things at him. Following his instructions, I sit down on the floor.

“You may put your clothes back on,” the jail warden smiles and throws some dirty rags at me. “This is your bed now. Welcome to Mapusa Jail.”

I need to be very careful and pay attention to details. The first day in a new jail. I am escorted down a corridor with cells along it. They all have iron bars instead of doors. I notice a pair of human eyes glaring in the dark. Somebody is shouting: “Foreigner, foreigner, Russian!” Everything reminds me of a zoo, with big apes sitting in cages.

“Cell number four,” the guards open the door with a clang.

Seven pairs of eyes stare at me curiously. I silently look around the cell. It is slightly larger than the balcony on my house. How can it hold so many people? A window with three different layers of iron bars, a toilet in the corner with a small door covering only the bottom. A loud color TV sitting on a metal shelf nailed to the wall. An old Indian with a mongoloid face points at a space near the window, pushing his mattress aside. “Not a bad place, by prison standards,” I think, putting my stuff on the floor. Sitting along a barely lit wall, seven people eagerly watch me in the darkness. It is unlikely that I will see a bed again soon. Indians like to sleep on the floor.

## ***Chapter 10. Part Two. Outside.***

“They don’t seem to care where they sleep,” I say, pointing at the locals lying directly on the sidewalk.

“Indians must be the laziest people after Arabs,” Yair answers after a short pause, lifting his feet so as not to step on a person sleeping in the shadow of a tree. “They sleep most of their life. They sleep at night, they sleep after meals, they sleep at lunchtime. They really don’t care where they sleep. Wherever they feel like sleeping, that’s where they sleep. Wherever they can find some shadow, they make themselves comfortable.”

“That’s why it’s so dirty all around here. They prefer sleeping to collecting their own trash,” Edi adds, stretching her thin lips to kiss Yair, “I love you, my darling.”

Yair embraces Edi around her narrow waist, trying to catch the moment and enjoy the spontaneous feeling of love, as often happens with lovers, but he stops suddenly. Elderly Indians sitting in the shadows of the trees and houses start to shout aggressively from all corners of the street: “No kiss! No kiss! Go home, kissing at home!” They instantly transform from kind old people into evil dwarves, shaking their fists at us and shouting something that is obviously really offensive.

“Why don’t we go back to the hotel, drink some tea and smoke a chillum on the roof. Nobody will disturb you kissing there. And there’s a magnificent view over Pushkar from up there,” I suggest, unwilling to get into a conflict with the locals.

“Savages,” Edi tells the old men in a low condescending voice, hugging her boyfriend.

“To hell with them, let’s go. They can’t have been able to get it up for years, that’s why they’re angry with themselves,” Yair replies, taking his girlfriend by the hand.

Pushkar is wonderful; a city of vegetarians and camels. A small town situated around a small round lake full of fish. We pay a few rupees for a plate of boiled peas and spend some time watching carp jostling each other, trying to swallow as much food as they can with their fat lips. It’s surprising that you can’t buy meat or fish in this town. It is illegal. Meat and fish are not on sale anywhere. The city, which is home to so many Hindu temples, is considered holy in India. Just like in Delhi, the narrow streets look like a stream of biomass. Camels, cows, elephants, monkeys, tourists, locals; the entire motley mass flowing between a dozen temples, leaving hundreds of pounds of shit beneath their feet. A wonderful city, where it is easier to buy opium and hashish than meat and fish.

“At the lake shore there is a nice place where we can smoke. Shall we crash there for a while?” Yair suggests, wiping the sweat off his face.

“I don’t mind, we need some shade, somewhere close to the water,” I agree, waving a hand fan that I bought along the way.

We walk some fifty yards and find ourselves in a cool place by the lake with dozens of concrete benches. A few hundred people of all kinds are standing and sitting, all of them waiting for the show that happens every day. The show called ‘sunset’. The people around me don’t look like those you normally see in touristy coastal areas. Almost everyone is wearing simple yet colorful Indian clothes. Most of them, regardless of sex or age, have long hair or dreads. I feel like I am on a different planet, as if I have traveled by time machine and ended up in the era of the hippy heyday. The sound of drums is to be heard everywhere. People are drinking tea, dancing, and talking to each other. Nobody is in any hurry. I can hear mantras praising Indian gods coming from all sides. It’s surprising, but nobody is drinking alcohol; everybody is smoking chillums. Everyone looks happy and carefree. The Sun touches the hill and Yair hurries to finish preparing his chillum. The best time for meditation with a chillum is sunset. During sunset, it is much easier to understand that nothing lasts forever in this world. Out of the blue, two police cars pull up to the lake and cops wearing sunglasses jump out of them. “Oh, here it goes,” I think, recalling the Russian police. Oddly enough, nobody except me is even thinking about hiding their charas and chillums. Nobody seems to care about the presence of the police. Yair points at a strangely important looking Indian getting out of a jeep and reassures me.

“Do you see the guy wearing the suit? He is one of the ministers of India, he was written about in the newspapers. He’s come to Pushkar to meditate for a while. Every evening he comes down here with his security to watch the Sun go down.”

I can only imagine what would happen in Russia, if somebody tried to smoke hashish with a Russian minister present. He’d probably be arrested and jailed for ten years as a terrorist. And here babas<sup>2</sup> smoke hashish at every temple.

All of a sudden, as if on cue, the sound of the drums coming from different parts of the shore starts to blend into one rhythm. This means that the Sun has touched the horizon. Edi lights up the chillum for Yair and recites a mantra. “Bom Bolenath, Sabke Sath, Bom Shiva, Bom Shankara, Bom.” At the same moment, I can hear mantras praising Shiva for creating charas coming from all around. Nobody but me seems to be paying any attention to the minister and his security. It seems like nothing exists for him in such moments, either. He is watching the tired Sun going down with everyone else. Dozens of chillums proudly point at the sky amid a huge cloud of sweet charas smoke; an incredible sight. I deeply inhale the Himalayan charas and think that I may be falling in love with this country. Poor freedom is better than glamorous slavery. Do what you want, but don’t disturb others. This is arguably the authentic democracy that was replaced in my country by the deceptive phrase “Everybody has equal rights”. Nowhere else have I ever felt equal to

others in terms of rights like here in Pushkar, smoking hashish next to a minister and watching the Sun go down. Next comes a moment of silence. A gust of wind blows a small palm leaf out of a cart full of leaves used as disposable plates. Time seems to stop for a moment and it feels like the leaf is falling endlessly in the silence. In slow motion, it falls as if dancing, and I stand in silence absorbing the magic. The moment it touches the ground, somewhere on the opposite side of the city a loud bell starts to toll, as if somebody has pushed an invisible 'Play' button, and everything comes alive again after the divine pause, filling the world with thousands of sounds. The Sun has set; life goes on.