

Мари Тее



Chapter 14. Part One. Inside.

My Lena arrives tomorrow. Maybe she will get me out of here. My mom has given us six thousand dollars from her retirement savings, and so now there is money for a lawyer. On one hand, I've missed my beautiful wife terribly; but, on the other, I feel a terrible sense of shame. I am ashamed that I was such an idiot that I managed to get locked up, leaving my girls to survive alone outside. I madly want to hug my Lena. But how will I be able to live in peace after that, here in prison, unable to touch her, knowing that she is somewhere near? How can I go about my business, remembering her smell, her touch? I'll be so glad to see my Lena, but how much misery will I have to suffer after I return to the cell? How can you learn to turn off your memory and feelings? Having created a schedule for my day, I have almost learned not to think about my loved ones. Waking up at six in the morning, I start the day with my morning procedures, and then I read books by Indian philosophers. Aurobindo, Krishnamurti, Osho, Rabindranath Tagore – their books help me tune into the perception of the illusory nature of our existence. Then breakfast and a walk follow, during which I discuss the duality of philosophical reflection with Viktor. After the walk: gymnastics, learning Indian and English, lunch, chess, a walk with Viktor again, gymnastics, dinner, reading Russian books, and finally, sleep. There is no time at all for doing nothing.

“Walking time!” the guards shout, once again opening the door with a loud noise. But I do not shudder, for me it has already become as familiar a sound as the endlessly screaming noise from the TV or the humming of the fans.

“How are you, Viktor?”

“Open Mapusa Beach!” Viktor yells loudly in response across the whole prison, dragging a plastic bucket with water. “Such a good day today! What about starting with water procedures, Vasya?”

Stripping down to our shorts, we pour a scoop of cold water onto our heads, and go for a walk around our little courtyard.

“Where shall we go today? From Arambol to Mandrem¹, or from Mandrem to Arambol?”

“It's exactly an hour,” Viktor answers, smiling and, as is traditional, standing on my left.

“It's strange: if you go on my left side when we walk, we go in parallel. But if you go on my right, we constantly bump shoulders. But with David it's the opposite. Maybe every person has his own attraction to the right or the left. What heat! Usually at this time, in May, I walk along the seashore every day. I love this time. The tourists are leaving; the beaches are deserted. You walk along the edge of the water, and when the waves roll back they leave a thin layer of water on the sand, turning the beach into a huge mirror. I like to walk, looking at the clouds reflected under my feet. The sky is overhead; the sky is underfoot. On one side: the endless sea, reflecting the May clouds, reminding you of the approaching rainy season. It feels like you are soaring among the clouds, and only the occasional small pebble or seashell, shining in the sunlight like the pieces of silver, reminds you that you are on the Earth. You don't need any drugs at that moment. It works better than LSD.”

“Well, what is stopping you from walking in the sky here, Vasya? We'll pour more water on us and the floor will be wet. We'll walk and look at the clouds. The sky is, of course, behind bars, and there is no sea, but you can see the tops of some palm trees. Sometimes you can see flocks of green parrots flying overhead. It's no worse than a beach. Tell me, what's new in your cell?”

“Well... I had another dream about the cops, Vitya. When will this endless dream be over? Again I ran away all night.”

1 *Arambol and Mandrem* – villages in North Goa.

“Well, I don’t dream,” Viktor says sadly, pouring the next ladle of water onto his head. “I close my eyes at night and the world switches off. I open them in the morning and it switches on again. No dreams. When my expert analysis comes in, I want to walk on a normal beach.”

“Oh, I don’t know, Vitya. Monsoon is coming, now I’m more worried about how not to rot in here.”

“How can I manifest for the expert analysis to come by September? What do they write, Vasya, in your books about transurfing reality? What do I need to do to bring the analysis here quicker? I’m prepared to be here until fall; I will get pumped. My belly has gone now. I will learn English, and get out at the beginning of the season, born again – all the chicks will be mine. I have no desire to stay here in the season.”

“The first thing to do, Vitya, is to believe and want it strongly enough. And now tell me, how is it that everyone is in here for drugs and you’re in for dental anesthetic?”

“I got in the police’s way. You know that they control all of the deliveries of drugs here. A gram of cocaine is sold for a hundred bucks, and I came up with my own powder. I bought amphetamine at the pharmacy, mixed it with ephedrine, and added some Novocain for taste. It didn’t differ from cocaine. And the most important thing is that it costs five dollars per gram. The entire cocaine market almost collapsed. I sold it at half the price of the others. And, by the way, my powder is better than cocaine. You have to sniff cocaine every half an hour, and my powder works for four hours. So they decided to put me into prison, as the main enemy of the Goan economy. If they didn’t add anything to the anesthetic, I should be released after the arrival of the export analysis.”

“But, it’s an outrage – going to jail for Novocain!”

“Here, Vasya, everyone who is connected to drugs serves time as a result of some sort of outrage. It is impossible to jail a smart drug-dealer honestly. Especially if he is a foreigner.”

“So how did the police get onto you?”

“Well, I can only guess. Where did I sell my powder? In East End. Who runs East End? Tamir and his police cover. It was probably his team that grassed on me. When the police came to arrest me, I tried to play dumb, as if I didn’t know anything, didn’t understand English, and that I was a tourist. Pashish, their boss, dialed some number and gave me the phone. And there was a voice saying in Russian, ‘Hey, you, that’s enough playing dumb. You will serve some time and become a bit smarter.’ So I’m serving my time and growing wise.”

“It sounds like one and the same Russian sent us here, Vitya.”

Chapter 14. Part Two. Outside.

Two weeks pass in a flash. I don’t want to think about Russia at all. The parties, which are held almost every night, give me no choice regarding how to spend my evenings. Crowds of tourists prowl the streets of Anjuna, Chapora and Vagator, hoping to find the night’s best party. It is hard not to join them. Quickly getting exhausted, I realize that I need to move somewhere further away from the center of the trance movement. So I move. I move to the northernmost point of Goa, to the place that various guides dub as ‘the last refuge of hippies and freaks from all over the world.’ I move to Arambol. Unlike Anjuna, in Arambol are people who have come here for a long time. Stretching their health over the whole season, they try to attend parties no

more than once a week, only going to the coolest ones. By this time I have completely blended with this colorful and fun crowd, and don't differ from the other psychedelic tourists.

Replacing my shorts with an orange lungi², I spend my days hanging around in beach restaurants, meeting and talking to various interesting people. My shoulders are covered with a large bright yellow kerchief tied around my neck to protect from the sun. I don't need anything else in the way of clothes. The only thing I carry around with me is an orange bag containing a chillum, the keys to my bike, money, and an old broken camera, filled with a variety of drugs. In these restaurants, buying myself charas, MDMA and LSD without having to even go outside, I manage to sell half of what I acquire to newly arrived Russian tourists, fully recovering my money. I am sure that the key to successful sales is my appearance. Just like the freaks around me, I am covered with tattoos, several large pirate earrings hang in my ears, and I have dreadlocks. My dreadlocks are of course laughable, but I am proud of the three thin, matted braids that hang comically from my bald head.

Everyone I met refuses to believe that I have only been in India for a month. I am covered from head to toe with the attributes of a free life. Dozens of necklaces and charms made of the bones, fangs and claws of various exotic animals hang around my neck. I don't like the idea of returning home at all. I have finally found a place on Earth where I would like to live. The people who surround me are not like those I have been used to seeing since my childhood. They are real, genuine, and sincere. There are, of course, some complete idiots, but their number is as small as that of the normal people in Russia. There are a lot of things in Goa that attract interesting people from all over the world. Sea, sun, sex, fruit, music, drugs, freedom – all this is constantly available and you don't want to refuse it.

All of these things are self evident and complementary. But still, for me, the most important thing is the people. I really don't want to go back to an environment full of robot-like people! How can you voluntarily return from paradise – back to the sinful Earth? Compared to Goa, my homeland reminds me of hell. How have I lived for thirty years surrounded by my fellow citizens? Once again I will have to see their drunk, stupid faces around me. What can I talk about with these people? With people who were brought up on the books of Darya Dontsova and Tatiana Ustinova³. I don't understand people who love Petrosyan's humor and live someone else's emotions, through endless TV series. My brain thinks feverishly without ceasing, looking for a way or a reason to stay in India. You need to think something up. Thousands of people manage to leave their business to come and stay here to live, in the land of promise. Or should I forget Goa and return to the hell that I've lived in all my life? But where can I take a pill to forget all the wonderful things that I have seen in only a month?

I am sitting in a small restaurant on the shore of the Arabian Sea, five meters away from me the gentle Indian waves slapping onto the rocks. The Sun is just beginning its short path from east to west. I am slowly eating a fruit salad, enjoying the beautiful view. A few meters away from me, on the beach, a solitary yogi with dreadlocks down to the ground, sitting in the lotus position, is meditating on the Sun, as it rises higher and higher. I wish I could meet and see off the Sun, eat fresh fruit, and communicate with great people my whole life, just like he does.

“Hi, Vasya. Have you been sitting here for a long time?” a tall guy asks me, interrupting the flow of my thoughts.”

In front of me stands my Goan friend Arik, or as the natives call him, Ara. He has been living in Goa for four years already. Two meters tall, blonde hair, tanned, muscular body and smart, intelligent eyes – this is a brief description of this interesting person. And he managed to stay here, didn't he? Is it really possible to get into shape, eating only fruit and vegetables? Why do I have to miss my chance?

2 *Lungi* – a traditional garment worn around the waist in India.

3 *Darya Dontsova* and *Tatiana Ustinova* – modern Russian authors who are read by uneducated people, unwilling to think for themselves.

“What did you say, Arik?”

“I said, have you been sitting here for a long time, Vasya?”

“No, they’ve just brought the fruit, join me,” I reply, not having fully returned to reality yet.

“I’m not alone. My buddy from Moscow has arrived. His name is Roma.”

A standard Moscow tourist stands in front of me. A crew cut, shifty and uncertain glance, expensive western-style clothes, and a ‘club tan’ of a whitish-blue hue.

“My name is Vasiliy,” I say, extending my hand to him.

“Have you been in Goa long?”

“A couple of weeks.”

“Well, how do you like it?”

“I still don’t quite understand what is what.”

“I’ve been here for a little more than a couple of weeks, but some Israelis helped me to understand everything. I traveled with them for two weeks across India to Goa.”

Roma, having examined me from head to toe, makes a surprised face.

“Actually, I thought you had been living here all your life, Vasya.”

“You’re kind of right, I’ve been sitting here thinking that I probably lived here my entire previous life. That’s how comfortable I feel here! I have no desire at all to leave this place.”

“So don’t go,” Arik interrupts us, pointing to the menu. “That’s what I want: shrimps in sweet and sour sauce. I have been suffering the whole morning, wondering what to choose for breakfast. And when I saw your thoughtful face – I immediately realized that I needed shrimps in sweet and sour sauce.”

“I envy you, Arik. You made a decision and left Russia.”

“And what’s stopping you from doing the same? Think something up. Use your head! Four years ago I also realized that I didn’t want to live in Russia any longer.”

“It’s easy to say ‘think something up.’ I have a family, friends, and my favorite work in Russia.”

“Why don’t you bring it all over here, and live happily ever after? Vasya, let’s go up to the hill tonight and trip. You will have a chance to think, and at the same time we will help Romka to move his assemblage point⁴: this poor fellow has been struggling for two weeks, not understanding what is going on,” Arik says mysteriously, picking a strawberry out of my fruit salad.

4 *Assemblage point* – a dynamic oscillating vortex of energy that exists within all of us. From the teachings of Carlos Castaneda.