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**Moonlight Sonata of Budapest
(Novel)**



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PALETSI

Graduates of 1980 group N127
of the construction department,
Georgian Polytechnic Institute (GPI)
them. IN AND. Lenin

"Let's talk about the strangeness of love,
I don't know of any other conversation.
A.S. Pushkin

Moonlight Sonata of Budapest

I

The soft light of the night lamp illuminated the pages of the book being read, gradually lost its strength and imperceptibly dissipated in a nearby space.

Distracted for a moment, the reader noticed a working living creature, diligently weaving a web between the lower edge of the television cabinet and the parquet floor that had not remembered the mastic for a long time.

"Wow, what a smart and at the same time stupid spider creature," the eyes followed in surprise. What a unique creation the web is, and what a strange work, unnecessary and long out of place.

"Do you really think that this creation of yours will be tolerated here, huh?" the question to the spider sounded in an undertone.

"It's none of your business," came the reply.

- How is it not mine? Isn't this my home?

- This one is yours, and the one that I build is mine.

You could have asked for permission!

- What for? Isn't cleanliness in your room a solution in itself? Vaughn, Dormidontu, who wove a web in

toilet, I suppose you yourself drag flies lined up, then butterflies and throw half-dead ones on his web, and I, then, should die of hunger?

- Well, go and build yourself a house there.

- It's closer!

- Yes, but the household will immediately sweep away your structure!

- Before they sweep away, I will have time to hunt. And don't bother me, please! You read, so read, do your thing, and let me do mine. You might think that you people are smarter than us. Build far from what you should. Earthly, not heavenly.

The reader was stunned, and the spider continued its house-building. Eyes watched the construction process with amazement.

The spider deftly moved from one end of the building to the other, crouched, measured the distances and, taking them into account, fastened the ends of the threads.

The phone ringing prevented the growing amazement.

- Hello! Hey Serge! – the voice was distributed in a tube.

"Hi," came the response.

- What are you doing?

- Yes, nothing special, I recently sent my dissertation to Moscow, to the Higher Attestation Commission, and now I'm sitting and waiting for an answer.

- And how long to wait?

- A month, probably.

-Wow! Just!

- What exactly?

Yes, I have a small idea here.

- And what is it?

“Maybe we’ll go somewhere for ten days!”

- Where?

- Well, for example, to Hungary.

- Why exactly there?

- Well, maybe not there, but this is the cheapest and most beautiful trip abroad.

- And how much?

- Only six hundred and thirteen rubles.

- For me, this is a lot, and over time it’s tight ...

- I understand, but try, move your brains. When else will such an opportunity present itself? I also want to convince the guys

Fight with Shalva!

- I don't know, Denis, I really don't know... - Sergey hesitated.

- Well, look, call later if you decide. Come on.

- OK Bye! – I heard a staccato buzzer.

The spider continued his labor activity.

- Well, get out of here! - said the heated Sergey, sharply moved his foot towards the web.

II

The air warmed up by the electrical appliance slowly spread throughout the room. Of course, the efforts of one section of the electric heater were not enough, but he still managed to break the sharp cold, especially since the second one turned on from time to time, although not for long.

Outside the window, even at night, the temperature was above zero, but the room was still stubbornly and steadily freezing.

- Okay! Let's say, a country - a great power was destroyed, but why deal with central heating?

The administrative-command bureaucracy is a gigantic force driven by pygmies. Perhaps it will be the last remaining bastion, even if everything around collapses.

- We will destroy the whole world of violence to the ground, and then we are ours, we will build a new world, who was nobody, he will become everything!

- Father, you did it once already, now you are going to the second one?

- As many times as needed!

Why is humanity so restless? Why, relentlessly and at a catastrophic speed, sorts out the forms and way of life, and thinking?

- Everything flows, son, everything changes.

- Yes, but why every time with more and more mass and speed, when not you have to manage yourself, but others.

- Well, I can agree with your first thought, son, but I would argue with the second.

- After all, civilization is an aversion to violence, murder, terror, to war, finally!

Yes, but it has been like this since time immemorial! Violence begets violence, even though wars end in truces.

- But at what cost?

Fritters with sour cream obviously came in handy for more than one cup of drunk tea.

- No, after all, a samovar and tea is a great thing, especially in winter, - the father of his son convinced.

- Borya, to the phone, - the sonorous voice of the sister was heard, - they ask you!

- Who? Boris asked, running to the phone.

- Denis!

- Hello, Boris, how is life young?

- Yes, where is the young one, - Boris doubted, - young up to thirty, and then the adult begins.

- Even at thirty?

- Even at thirty!

"And you, Boris, are wrong," Denis quoted the famous words of one of the members of the Politburo, "a person is young until he marries, and even though we are already thirty, or even a little more, then ...

- Well, yes, really!

"By the way, why didn't you get married then?" Denis asked.

- For God's sake, leave me alone, and it's sickening without you!

Denis's merry laughter was heard in the receiver.

- Take it and get married first!

- I want have time to walk a little!

- Yes, curious! And how are you going to do it, during such global changes and the beginning of devastation?

- Well, not necessarily here with us, but, say, in Hungary!

- What? Crazy?! What did you lose there?

- They say it's very beautiful, warm. There are miracles, there the goblin roams ...

- Are you serious? - Boris became interested, - And Chernobyl, radiation? Is it really close there?

- In all seriousness! - Denis confirmed, - the radiation will overtake us here, and then, in an instant, we will slip through for a short time and back.

- And when?

- Weeks through two maximum.

- I won't have time, I have an "state of emergency" at my facility. The trusses were brought to the site, and during installation it turned out that the span length between the columns was slightly more than the specified one, so that the standard support length for supporting the trusses was not enough.

- So what?

- How so what? It is necessary to redesign and hand over the overdue object.

- Well, hand over, and for everything, about everything you have two weeks.

- Where does the money come from?

- Well, I think, after the delivery of the object they will give something?

- You think?

- Well, of course! Before that, ask for an advance!

- How?

- At least six hundred rubles, and I will add thirteen myself.

- Why would you?

- Well, we'll figure it out somehow, but for now, think about my proposal. Yes, I called Sergey here and already told him, but I can't get to Shalva. Yes, and tired of persuading you, offer him yourself!

- Okay, Denis, in general, as you were the head of the group, you continue to be one to this day.

- Yes, but then you listened to me more than now. And now I manage, as in "The Twelve Chairs", to take up something, as soon as you are convinced that it is something!!!

- I'll try to call a few more of ours, although I'm not very sure of the success of desires and their compliance with the possibilities. After all, the essence of

management is to gather the right people in the right place and at the right time. Gather at least five or seven people, our small den, and have a good time. Who knows, maybe for the last time in our lives.

- Well, Denis, why so pessimistic?

- Rather realistic, - Denis corrected, - the farther into the forest, the more firewood and the less us. And then, you know, not all dreams come true!

- Well, okay, Denis, you tired me, I'll think about it, although I don't promise anything in advance. There is no time, no money, and hunting.

- But then we will gladly remember all our lives. Well, okay, look, no, and there is no trial, but yes, it's time to go! Denis concluded.

"A person needs to jump high all his life," thought Boris, putting down the phone.

- Space age - cosmic velocities and loads. How many surprises fall to the lot of a person every day. Every day is a small life.

III

A small dark yellow PAZ-ik rolled from wheel to wheel and pretty shook the passengers. We had been moving up the road for more than an hour.

- How many times my uncle asked me to come to his village, but still it was not possible. And now it was finally possible, not his funeral was going. Even when he played two weddings almost in a row, first a son, and then a daughter, it didn't work out either. And now ... How many people, how much trouble, but he no longer needs anything, no worries, except, as they say, prayers for the remembrance of the soul, and even then, it seems, few people will succeed. And once again the words of Albert Camus are already remembered: no one cares about anyone. And indeed, even though in words we say the opposite.

No, perhaps, and he, apparently, is wrong, because our church always commemorates and prays for everyone from birth to the last breath. And then he understands. But how much in life is unnecessary, useless. Empty meetings, gatherings, idle conversations, fuck. More than six months have passed, but how I remember this trip to the village. When it comes to extreme danger to life and health, a person begins to flutter with all his might and tries to grab even the last straw, so that if not save and save life, then at least continue. It is said that in anticipation of death, Josephine became wise as a five-hundred-year-old tortoise.

-Bastards, they gutted me all over, pulled out all the stones to a single one from the ducts, and you? Where were you, huh? After all, I could die, and then whom would you try to take with you to Hungary?

- Shalva, well, who knew about it, you should at least tell! It was not for me to start advertising and propaganda campaigning. But I could die on the operating table, right? And where were you then? You left me in the middle of a fight! And why, in fact, you did not come to visit me in the hospital?

"Because we are bastards," Boris agreed.

Boris himself was not yet sure of his abilities, but he zealously persuaded his classmate and friend.

- But after all, the road is much more dangerous than any operation, - Shalva excused himself, - and then the doctors demand that the regimen and postoperative schedule be strictly observed.

- Well, in the end, Denis asked me about it, and I fulfilled his request. And there it's your business, do as you know, but just know that the only way to visit and see you after the operation is to go all together to Hungary!

- Who else is going?

- I do not know yet. Let's tell everyone, and there, how it will turn out. Yes, I also wanted to ask you: do you like pasta?

- No, - Shalva rebuffed, - but what, are they in use in Hungary?

- Yah! But I love them very much and bought two packs of the highest grade, cooked a little yesterday and fried them with an onion in Blendo oil. Heard about this?

- No, but what?

- Heartburn has been tormenting for the second day. Can you tell me what to do?

- No, I won't. My tea is getting cold, and I have to pick the raisins from the buns, and you pester with your questions. Well, try doing a cleansing rinse.

- Do you think it will help?

- Well, of course!

- Well no! Heartburn is a process in the upper channels of the gastric tract, and not in the intestines.

- Do you think they are related?

- You think?

- Well, of course!

- Rinse with warm water with potassium permanganate? Mom also advises, - Boris said, - but I'm pulling everything, I think it will pass by itself! But no!

- Yes, and call later, let me know how the procedure went!

- Yeah! Well, okay, bye, hello Irina.

- Come on, come on.

- Come on, I'll call you in two years.

Going to his place, Boris remembered the words of Saint-Exupery that, uniting with other people in a squadron, at a factory or in a sports team, a person endlessly outgrows himself. Forgetting about himself, he acquires himself. Maintains solidarity with comrades in a common cause, even in danger, even in defeat.

You can't forbid living beautifully, thought Shalva, and, as Abe Lincoln said, "most people are as happy as they want to be happy," and Kozma Krutkov advises: "If you want to be happy, be happy," but what is happiness, where is it? Is it not in search of it in the old days that the Greeks equipped long-distance sea voyages? Where to look for it? In love for friends, work, a woman ... But there are so many of them. Everything in this slips away and floats away, dissolves and disappears, everything is unstable and imaginary, everything is impermanent and, as philosophy says: there is only one thing that is constant in life - impermanence! In any case, I think that this trip, if it takes place for me, will infuse new fresh flows of information and knowledge into my life, which, undoubtedly, can be useful in the future. Although let's see what the team will gather.

IV

Hands that had lost their grace from many years of everyday homework carefully formed minced meat prepared ahead of time and wrapped it in grape leaves. A fifteen-year-old granddaughter helped to put the packages in an enameled pan.

- Ha, play if you play! What do you think so much? the sixty-five-year-old father said to his son.

"Wait, let me think a little," the son asked, making simple calculations of bones in his mind.

The evening family idyll was interrupted by an unexpected call at the door.

- Boys, open, or should we go? - I heard the voice of the hostess.

- Yes, yes, let's open it, - one of the players answered, - go, Denis, open it, you still can't make a move!

The son-in-law entered, loaded with bags and a work folder, a tall, heavysset, handsome man. Having freed himself from the load with the help of Denis, he quickly threw off his cloak.

- Well, how are you here without me?

- You are alone? his mother-in-law asked him.

- Yes, why?

- And where is your wife?

- How? Isn't she here?

- No, - the mother-in-law drawled in surprise, - like you should have brought her.

- I spoke to her, and she said that she would come herself.

- Well, you see, I couldn't, it must be.

The son-in-law barely audibly mumbled something incomprehensible in response. And after an unpleasant conversation with his wife on the phone, he completely grumbled.

- He arrived tired, and now go after her. If I had known, I would have come home from work.

- And you don't go, - the father-in-law laughed, - we will exchange you for our daughter, let her be with them, and you with us. Is it coming?

- Uh, come on, father, what a time to joke!

- Ha, let's go, if you go, or we'll stop playing and you will be credited with defeat, - his father shouted at Denis with his bass.

The son-in-law was about to leave, but the mother-in-law delayed him, asked him to grab some bread and some potatoes along the way.

- I'm my grandmother Rosa, damn it ... - the son-in-law began loudly, but - culturally scolding, - I loved, and I will love, and I will never forget her! But! he added after a pause.

- Well done, here is the grandson, I understand! - praised his father-in-law. - How much time has passed since she is gone, but still loves!

- She kept saying: granddaughters, remember that when you marry a girl, you actually marry her entire family.

"Son, but we are one family already, and look what a beauty we have," the father-in-law cast a glance at his granddaughter.

"Dad, if you want, I'll go with you," she offered.

The front door slammed, frames automatically ran across the TV screen, the father looked suspiciously at the control panel not far from his son, who was holding several black knuckles in his hand:

- Mother, tell him not to switch channels every now and then and let him watch one program like a human being.

- Denis, why are you making your father nervous? - calmly asked the mother, coming up to the table with the bones laid out and scattered. You know he has high blood pressure!

- Mom, look for yourself, it's just such a transfer, and I have nothing to do with it. - Denis hastened to justify himself.

- Well, okay, stop fooling around, finish, we'll cover dinner, ours are about to appear.

While not much was covered, Denis made several business phone calls he needed, for which he also received an irritated remark from his father and was forced to explain to him that a trip to Hungary was just around the corner and he needed to complete the remaining business or forward them to others.

The whole family gathered at dinner, and after delicious homemade dishes and light aromatic white wine, everyone's irritated mood changed to warm and loving.

V

On the last day of paperwork, a small queue of four old friends, classmates, lined up in front of the cash desk of a semi-private, semi-state company.

First up was Denis, the ideal organizer of the trip, a tall, lean young man with a black mustache. Behind him is Boris, also tall, but reddish, which is why his friends often called him "freckled". Hiding behind Boris was the smaller Sergey, nicknamed "Serge", and the most grouchy, nicknamed the Chilean dictator "Pinochet", closed the row.

Having paid a live six hundred and thirteen rubles, and having received a receipt with the relevant tickets and documents, Denis walked away from the cashier with a happy smile.

- Well, now it's your turn, - he glanced at the remaining three.

- No, maybe we won't go after all, guys, huh? - let the duck from the end of the line Pinochet.

"Well, if you don't go, then I won't go either, guys," Sergey did not lag behind them.

- Yes, you, in your mind, you should have thought before, but now that's all, I don't know anything, - Denis turned pale and alarmed, - am I going alone?

- Well, you wanted to, you go! Boris laughed.

- A person never knows what awaits him, - Shalva supported him, - especially on such a long journey.

"Yes, and I'll just pay off the interest-bearing debt, it's not somehow inconvenient to go on credit," Sergey bent his own.

The guys tortured Denis with their doubts and fears before following his example, but soon they were already washing their future trip in a khinkalnaya located near.

On the table were mugs of beer, a plate of cracked sausages, bread, and a salad of pickled cabbage and carrots. In anticipation of the ordered khinkali, they paid tribute to them.

- Guys, so that I get more sausages, I suggest you eat less, - Shalva tightened, - because, do you know how they are cooked? - he began to tell, every now and then sipping beer from a mug, but, recollecting himself, he barely managed to grab the last remaining sausage.

- Okay, really, I really love the name more than the sausages themselves, which sounds so filigree and sensitive in the Georgian language - "Sasosis"! Isn't it great?

- Yes, indeed, there is something in it!

"But Khinkalcenter is a more powerful name," Boris doubted.

Shalva bit with a bang, got to him a long hot sausage, from which drops of juice splashed.

- What flavor! he added mustard to the next slice. As La Rochefoucauld said, everything we like is either immoral or conducive to replenishment.

"Don't worry, you won't get fat from one sausage," Denis reassured him.

"Not from one, but if he adds one more khinkali to it, then it's quite possible," Boris laughed.

- Do not wait! - thundered Shalva, - I won't repeat such a mistake in khinkali, because only a mortal makes mistakes twice.

- And pickles are also very tasty. Sergei noted.

- Yes, we have quite a lot of this stuff, - Denis confirmed, - Kuban girls bring cabbage, cucumbers, and tomatoes to us from Armenia.

"Chief, your khinkali are ready, take them away," the bartender shouted from behind the counter.

Soon Denis was carrying a large metal tray with large white hot khinkali, from which fragrant steam was emitting, bulging behind the moving tray.

- Yes ... - Shalva drawled, - truly, everything that does not kill makes us stronger!

Barely holding the hot "navel" of khinkali, from which hot steam continued to flow, Denis slowly brought it to his mouth and, before he had time to complete the first bite, hot drops of fatty aromatic juice flew out of it.

- Yes, you be careful, otherwise you will douse and scald everyone before the trip, - Shalva was alarmed.

- Believe me, guys, - Denis justified himself, - if it makes sense to spend money, then only on books and travel.

- What about food? - Sergei corrected, picking up the second khinkali.

“Money is not a goal, but a means to an end,” Boris intervened.

- Indeed, happiness is not in them, but they are also needed, - Sergey added.

- Guys, maybe we will return the tickets back, - Shalva teased everyone.

- I will return it to you, - Denis grinned at him.

- Yes, but if the constant of a person's existence is his ability to think, then why leave? After all, you can think anywhere in the world, including in our homeland, - Sergei quoted the famous philosopher Merab Mamardashvili.

- Sergey, are you at the same time with them? Denis sighed sadly.

- This is not me, but Merab Mamardashvili, - Sergey explained.

- If you betray me now and leave me, as the notorious Kvarkvare said, in the middle of the battle, then I will stop being friends with you. - Denis threatened.

- It remains only to regret what we are doing, - Sergei philosophized.

Gradually, the conversation grew into pragmatics of the upcoming trip.

“We still need to think, guys, what to buy and take with us,” Denis reminded him, trying to involve his friends in the topic of the upcoming trip, “after all, we change only twenty rubles, which is a little more than three hundred forints.

- And more precisely? Boris asked.

- It seems, three hundred thirty three, - Denis specified.

- Yes, not a lot, of course, - Shalva confirmed, - you can't say anything.

- The rich, the happy, - Sergey commented.

- But, while you hesitated there, I managed to find out something, - Denis said. - You can take there, first of all, let's say, electrical and household appliances, with a show off, as if we need them there.

- For example? Shalva asked.

- Well, for example, irons, an electric coffee maker, audio tape recorders, well, I don't know what else to add! Well, let's say, an electric drill, - Denis enumerated.

- And if you ask why it is needed? Sergey suddenly asked.

- You will say that you cannot sleep until you drill a couple of holes in the wall, - Boris laughed.

- And if you grab a little bit of gold? - Shalva asked, - well, for example - a ring, supposedly an engagement ring, or a chain, or something else. Yes, gold-plated cufflinks, buckles.

- If you're so rich, why would you want to go there? - Sergey objected to him. “For that kind of money, you can have a good walk here.

- No, - objected Boris, - the party there is still very different from the local one.

- How do you know?

- I know, last year my cousin went and was very pleased!

More and more involved in solving the financial problems of the upcoming trip. Moreover, Denis now tried to interfere less, but, he ate his portion of khinkali and washed it down, rather, as if he were watching.

“Well, that’s all, my dears,” he thought, “you won’t get away from me anywhere, but dress up and go like pretty little ones.”

Having fairly refreshed themselves, the friends slowly climbed one of the streets of the old city to Freedom Square.

“And yet, the leader of the revolution was not treated quite fairly,” Denis started a new topic - the hurdy-gurdy, when they went out to a vast square, in the center of which there was a large round lawn with traces of a pedestal that stood here, quite recently, a monument to the leader of the revolution .

-Wait, yes, - Shalva drawled slightly, grimacing, - don't start, don't distract us from thinking about the upcoming trip.

“Our great leader argued that the state can be strong only when people know everything and consciously do everything,” Denis quoted.

-That's it! - Shalva confirmed and added instructively: - For everything! What they went to, they came to.

“It would be nice if it wasn’t the case that you come, it’s not at all what you’re going to,” Boris doubted.

- In the same thing you can see different things. Sergei philosophized.

- The carousel continues, the history of mankind repeats itself, and each time at a higher and higher level of social and technological progress and development, - Denis uttered dejectedly.

- And accordingly, on a lower spiritual level, - Sergei noted with regret, - there is a decline in spirituality in life now, and she lives, as it were, separately from us, bookishly.

- And yet, in order to live well tomorrow, guys, you need to survive today, - Boris remarked, - “survive”, go through everything and stay alive, survive, I say and not lose yourself.

- Yes, in order to stay alive, continuous efforts are required, otherwise the personality will not be formed, Merab Mamardashvili teaches us, - Sergey was not slow to add.

- Especially in our, transitional, pre-revolutionary time, the time to live in which the Chinese considered a curse. The development of events is clearly moving towards some kind of grandiose denouement of events, - Denis spread, - a witness,

and even more so, a participant in which he did not want to be. In general, let it be what should be and what will be. We'll go, have a look, show ourselves, in the meantime, maybe everything will work out. Still, it's better to live your own life than someone else's.

- How, - Sergei was surprised, - the life of his country, someone else's?

- No, of course not, but it is often run by people who pretend to do so.

- Are you going to justify the events of April 9 last year, Denis?

- No, of course not, but every stick has two ends.

- All right, it will be for you, - Shalva strictly demanded.

- Truly, everything in the world is afraid of time, as Eastern wisdom says, - Boris stated, - and even when Roosevelt himself did not advise to go into politics if you do not have skin as thick as a rhinoceros.

On the way to Rustaveli Avenue, they crowded into shops, looking for goods that could be taken on an upcoming trip. They were not too lazy even to go around the new, fashionable, four-story department store. Closer to noon, when they were passing by the Kashvetskaya church, Boris imperceptibly separated and fell behind everyone. Having missed, everyone from afar caught how he briskly ran to meet two girls leaving the church, kissed them, and, apparently, a lively conversation flowed.

- That's a man, huh? - Denis was surprised, - he won't endure until the trip.

- What are you doing here? Boris asked the girls in the meantime.

- They were in the service, - one of them explained, fair-haired, moderately well-fed.

"A memorial service for the victims of the April 9th tragedy was celebrated in the Church," added another, thin, black-haired, slightly shorter than the first. - Once again they reminded us that we will turn the earth into the earth.

- Once again about not superfluous!

- Where are you going? - in turn asked the brunette.

- And I'm not alone, with the guys, - Boris looked around.

- With ours, or what?

"Yes, they're waiting for me over there," he pointed out to the eyes.

- Oh, what are you talking about? Well, so go whether to them, - she winked at her friend, - now it is such a rarity, our meetings, not like before.

- Let's go, - Boris supported her, dragging both girls along with him.

- Guys, it seems that he is leading them to us, - Denis was the first to notice.

"They probably have two more girlfriends," Shalva joked.

- Are you really blind or what? You don't see, these are our girls, Marina and Lela,
- Sergey was surprised.

- Oh, and in truth, - peered and convinced Denis.

- Why did he pick them up now and drag them here? Shalva shrugged. "He must be persuading them to come with us. Also more! They will disrupt all plans there, and besides, they will be a burden to us.

- Oh, beauties, hello! - Denis leaned towards the approached fellow students, kissing them on the cheek, - how many years, how many winters! Long time no see!
The girls happily but modestly greeted each other.

- I don't know, Denis, before you paid more attention to all of us, but now ... -
Marina complained.

"Times are changing, and we are changing with them," Shalva explained the delay.

- Nobody cares about anyone now, nor time. Everyone is somehow on their own.

As if intervening in the conversation, there was a drawn-out, multi-tonal ringing of bells from the belfry of Kashveti.

- How good they call, - Sergey answered him.

- Denis is trying to gather us again, - Boris introduced the girls to the course of the doula - this time we are going on a tour to Hungary. If you want and can join, we will be glad.

The girls looked at each other. Lela hesitated a bit.

- When are you leaving? Marina asked.

- Now let's see, - Boris hurried to get his ticket. - So, that's it ... we're flying out exactly in a week to Kyiv, flight 7288, at ten thirty local time, meeting with the group at the airport, at the information desk, we'll stay in Kyiv for a couple of days, and then we'll go by train. Make up your mind, girls, we will introduce you to good guys there.

- Good guys here, - Lela looked back at the church.

- Well, they'll wait. Just think, a couple of weeks, - Boris continued to persuade, - and the church will not run away, it has stood for so long and will stand.

"Yes, perhaps you're right, she doesn't run away from anyone, it's us people who run away and avoid her, but we remember only when the hardships of life are really crushed," Marina sighed.

- Surprisingly, today's sermon of the priest coincided with our meeting. But what did he say? That it is not at all necessary to go somewhere to relax, that here, literally

nearby, you can relax much better than in any other corner of the world and even at the most expensive resort.

- The statement is doubtful, - Denis shivered.

- Yes, and I think that it is not forbidden to arrange sometimes out-of-town or foreign tours? Sergei objected.

- And the ticket is not so expensive, - Boris insisted, - only six hundred and thirteen rubles.

- Hare to pester and persuade the girls, he suggested and will, - Shalva could not restrain himself, - let them do as they see fit.

“No, we would be pleased to have your company on the trip,” Denis remarked delicately and not entirely sincerely.

- If you decide, let me know, Boris will pay for your trip, - Shalva teased his friend. Boris's face twisted.

Shalva and the rest of his friends could hardly contain their laughter.

The conversation dragged on for another fifteen or twenty minutes, they remembered the past, old mutual acquaintances and friends.

- Don't say anything, but time does its job, - Denis remarked, after he finally parted with the girls, - they were good, weren't they guys? How many fans have been entwined, but now it's not that.

“Girls after thirty generally give up very quickly,” Shalva said with the air of a connoisseur.

- Yes, how to say - doubted Sergei.

- We choose - we are chosen, alas, this is not always the same thing, - Boris stated.

- Nothing, they are on the right track and will not disappear, - Sergey bent his own, - but what will happen to us ...

- What we sow, we will reap, - Shalva minted, trying to round off the topic.

- In fact, most problems have very simple solutions, - Denis ignored his attempt, - everything has its time.

- Whom fate chooses, willy-nilly, tests, - Sergey suggested.

- Kozma Prutkov was right, - Boris intervened, - looking at this rapidly changing world, one cannot but be surprised.

- Remember how Rashid Giorgievich taught: the primary task is “not to be surprised, not to cry and not to laugh, but to understand!” Sergei recalled.

Are you suggesting that we become philosophers? Denis got excited.

- Life should be easier, guys, huh? It is given once, and everything must be done, - Boris simplified the situation, - as the Chinese say, "relax and have fun."

Hare - jarg. enough is enough.

They walked at a leisurely pace, Rustaveli Avenue seemed endless, but still, they were in a hurry to talk, they had to leave at the Rustaveli metro station.

The movement along the avenue was mysterious and elusive, both vehicles and pedestrians moved haphazardly, according to a strange but sensitive logic, and, perhaps, joyfully united everyone that in the dead of winter, at the end of January, warm, sunny weather stood over the city.

VI

At about nine o'clock in the morning, white Zhiguli-6 were smoothly rolling up to the central entrance of the bus station, looking for a free place for parking.

- Well, let's say goodbye, shall we? - the driver hesitated, standing in front of four friends who were flying off to Kyiv soon. - I remember the words of Pipin, addressed to his son Aguli, who is leaving for the army, from a truly "Extraordinary Exhibition", when he urges him to beware of women, and especially European ones. Be well done, stick together and just in case, also take into account the experience of Bhagavan, who teaches that women bind men in eight ways - dancing, singing, playing, laughing, footprints, appearance, touching and questions ...

- Only? Boris was surprised.

- I would add more - with eyes, a smile, air kisses ...

- And how did your wife "shoot" you, Nika? Sergey asked.

Nika hesitated, but immediately came to his senses.

"Oh," he sighed, scratching the back of his head. "My poor grandmother Rose! The more time passes, the more I remember her and love her more.

"I don't know how, Nika, but I feel that your grandmother Rosa will certainly go down in history," Sergei remarked with a smile. - About your love, you can write a good script.

- Yes, - Shalva agreed with him, - such things can happen in life that not a single screenwriter can even dream of, as Horatio was convinced of this a long time ago.

-Here, here, and I'm talking about it, - Nika agreed with him.

- Do not be upset, son-in-law, - Denis slapped him on the shoulder, - but now you have me. Nothing can be done, the conditions and the rules of the game are dictated by a woman, and the whole course of events and relationships depends on whether we accept them or not!

- Guys, - Nika pleaded half-jokingly - half-seriously, - take me with you. Don't you have one spare place?

- You can talk to the Guide! – said Sergey.

- Please, I didn't want to go anyway and I can give up my ticket, - Shalva readily responded.

- What are you kidding guys? Denis was outraged. - He brought us, thank you, well, go pick up and say hello.

- And right! Not that, I feel like I'll have to take you back. Everything in life is far from clear...

Friends, saying goodbye to Denis's son-in-law, moved with their sports bags to the airport building. Having gone deeper, they began to "shoot" with their views on the situation.

- Here, it seems, is our group, - Denis remarked, pointing towards the information desk.

- Are you Denis? - the tall, skinny type of about forty-five years old guessed, - I'm glad to meet you!

- Mutually, - Denis shook hands with him.

- I imagined you after our conversation on the phone.

- And here is the team, - Denis called his friends by name.

- Only? I thought you'd get a lot more people.

"Only now I missed you as troublemakers," thought Denis, "and that was not without difficulty. In addition, at the slightest opportunity, everyone strives, either mentally or in deed, to escape, at the very beginning of the path.

- Nothing, nothing, - the guide smiled sweetly, - but we have such a good group gathered, we will unite, make friends, and even get to know many people on the way.

- Yes, - Denis drawled, - of course, you managed to surpass us and gather a much larger group. But still not enough for a trip ...

"Come on, Denis," the guide suggested and began to call the members of the group, who were standing in a circle in front of their bags and suitcases. "These are the brother and sister of Dito and Nino," he pointed to a joyful young man of about twenty-seven and briefly

cut-cut pretty girl a little younger. - And these are our future doctors Vano and Kote, who recently completed their residency. The guys smiled sweetly and extended their hand in a friendly way for a shake. And this is our academy of sciences, that is, its employees, husband and wife Kako and Lia! - spouses of about fifty years old also gave smiles to new acquaintances. "This is the beautiful Mzia and young friends Gia and Dato, they are only twenty-two. Mzia looked somewhat older

Soon, four more women joined the group in pairs, young Ketino and Sofiko, and older Rusiko and Manana.

- Well well! So, there were only eighteen of us, including me, out of the expected twenty-five, - calculated Zaza, the guide, referring to the list - not a lot, of course, but not a little. There are supposed to be three more. We'll see! In the meantime, we will head to the sector in an organized and calm way, the registration of our flight has already been announced.

A pretty airport employee in a beautiful white and blue uniform checked the tickets of future passengers, checked them in, along the way wrote off the weight of luggage from the dial of the cargo scales. Freed from the lengthy procedure, as if recollecting themselves, they rushed before the announced landing in all directions, to buy some food and drink, some magazines and newspapers, some to call, some out of need.

Boris soon found himself in the toilet next to Sergei with another funny story.

- Don't be ridiculous, - Sergey asked him, - now it's not a laughing matter.

just before the flight, the first experiences of the guide began, with difficulty holding the members of the group, followed by his first sigh of relief, already in the cabin, when, after conducting a mini roll call, he recorded everyone in place.

- Well, with God! - he drawled meaningfully, when the newest airliner TU-154 - after a quick and not long running along the runway of the city airport - shot up sharply upwards, to a clear and sunny sky, across which white, fluffy clouds floated like ships on the sea, accompanying the airliner all the way to Kyiv.

The interior was warm, light and comfortable. Joyful, high spirits seemed to spread into some kind of invisible field that filled the entire cabin of the aircraft.

Soon pretty flight attendants started serving mineral waters and coffee.

Members of the group chatted briskly, shared proposals for the upcoming trip.

"The present is important, the rest doesn't count," Shalva quoted, leaning back in his chair, "but I feel good now, and little by little I begin not to regret that I got involved in this trip.

- Look, don't let this out to Denis, - Boris warned him, - we will keep him in constant tension.

- Flights in a dream and in reality! No, there is still something in it, - Sergei philosophized.

- "Okay you! For me, the main thing is that now you can't run away from me anywhere," Denis sighed to himself.

- You think? Sergey squinted at him, - do not rush, headman, ahead is still Kyiv, the birthplace of the freckled ancestors, - he warned, - the continuation must be better than the beginning, otherwise everything will end.

- Oh, this, perhaps, is what I can guarantee you with a large percentage of reliability, - Denis confidently declared, - because a person is born again and again every time.

- Monotony really kills life, - Sergei agreed with him, - thank you, Denis, for pulling us out of the house and out of the crazy whirlpool of events that is just spinning with us. Everything has its own rules and laws. Kill me, but I do not believe and cannot accept the motto "the end justifies the means." No, I'm afraid that we will break firewood in our country, and so we don't want to participate in this.

"You can't run away from fate, or from your country, it's given to a person from above," Denis suggested, "alas, a person, whether we like it or not, even though he is a political being, this, as Aristotle said, differs from an animal. You cannot take away from a person his fundamental need to determine, to explore the limits of his capabilities.

The flight was operated by Ukrainian Airlines with a Ukrainian crew.

It was not without difficulty that Boris managed to find a common language with one of the pretty young stewardesses, with whom he from time to time started a conversation about life in today's Ukraine and the modern problems that she has to face.

"Your Boris is very smart," Zaza remarked so that Denis, who was sitting not far from him, could hear.

- Without your help, it will be difficult for me to keep him during the trip, - Denis agreed with him.

- It was necessary to marry him before the trip, - complained Zaza.

- I did not have time, - Denis justified himself, - and, I think, it would hardly have helped.

Dito and her sister sat together in the first salon, and he got her philosophical, moral and ethical problems, issues of educating the younger generation, which was to come in the near future not to replace the current adult.

The young doctors Wano and Kote chatted briskly about the problems of today's medicine, and each spoke about those medical institutions in which they managed to get a job relatively recently. Nevertheless, both are immensely happy that they escaped for two weeks on a promising euro trip.

Spouses Kako and Leah mostly rested. only a few words were exchanged from time to time.

The youngest members of the group, Dato and Giya, who were sitting behind the beauty somewhat older than them, did not waste time in vain and quietly drove up to her, making her laugh with stories about various funny stories from their past and recent life.

“Who said that a book is the best protection for a traveler on the road? she thought, clapping and lowering her to her knees. “You will protect yourself from such people,” she barely restrained her laughter.

Two pairs of women, Ketino and Sofiko, as well as their senior employees, Rusiko and Manana, who settled down at the very end of the salon, still kept apart, slowly joining the general stream.

The bright fiery sun scorched the flying steel bird and those in it, scanned and irradiated the body and brain of everyone, warmed and filled with energy, especially those who desired it, joyfully accepted, thought and waited. It was not difficult for the sun to melt the steel bird into a steel rain on the fly and return it to the earth, not at all the same as it had risen into the sky, but the sky was now occupied by other tasks and goals.

The expanse of heaven hospitably accepted and led the steel bird at a height of ten thousand meters.

“Dear passengers,” a short but slender stewardess, who entered the cabin, began her pre-landing address, “our plane is completing its flight on the Tbilisi-Kyiv route. Please fasten your seat belts

and remain in their seats until landing, a complete stop of the aircraft engine and the approach of the gangway to it.

The temperature at the airport of the capital of Ukraine Kyiv, ...

Thank you for your attention.

- Long live Ukraine, your bread, our wine, - Shalva exclaimed, - I haven't been to you for a long time!

- And when do you come here at all? Boris asked.

In the first time rye! Shalva said after a short pause.

A ladder was rolled up, and the passengers gradually began to rise from their seats and make their way to the exit.

- Thank God, we landed successfully, - Denis burst out, - from the seat, my knees froze and my legs numb.

- It is difficult to walk after a few hours of flight in an airplane, but what is it like for astronauts to return to earth?!

- I will ask all members of the group to stay together and not far from me, - asked Zaza.

VII

At the bus station on Moscow Square, the group made a transfer to a new, comfortable, city bus, which, unlike the members of the group, was in no hurry to their hotel. He traveled around some of the sights of the city and carefully stopped at each stop, waited for passengers for a long time, reluctantly broke away from the place and, lazily further, and finally turned onto Khreshchatyk, where the hotel was located, waiting for transit guests from the capital of sunny Georgia.

Zaza soon found out all the relations with the administrator, and after the tedious bureaucratic paperwork, he turned to the group:

- Guys, unfortunately, due to some international conference, not all the reserved places were received, so settle down as best you can, in twos, threes. But be respectful and careful.

“Ayy, I hesitated,” Shalva drawled to himself, “and indeed the former Komsomol leader, which I don’t really like. And only such guides are put forward.”

Zaza noticed Shalva’s displeasure and asked Denis to look after him.

- You have a couple of hours to settle down and relax a bit, - continued Zaza, - and by seven in the evening we meet in the lobby. I will ask you to be precise so as not to excite and not irritate each other.

- It's not clear, but it's clear. Shalva mumbled in an undertone.

Let's go to the numbers.

- We are here, chief, not at an enterprise or an educational institution, but on a free tour, and your methods of communication have already become obsolete.

- Shalva, stop it, - Denis intervened.

- Hare, Denis, you got me too! Shalva was offended.

- On the trip, there are still some rules that we must reckon with. Didn't you fill out and sign a special form of the city executive committee?

- What other questionnaire?

- No, Zaza! I signed up for them! Denis explained.

- Well, stick to it, otherwise you are welcome from the group.

- What - about? pulled himself up to the guide Shalva, Denis with difficulty kept him - yes, I'll take you now!

Fortunately, Boris and Sergey arrived in time and almost by force dragged the buzzer to their room.

Shalva scolded for a long time, threatened to go back.

"You are going with us, not with him," Boris persuaded him.

Who is he to tell me how to behave? And yes, what did I do?

- Well, okay, just wait, be patient with us in Kyiv for two days, and then decide whether to go to Hungary or return, - Sergey also reasoned.

- I don't give a damn about such leaders, because of them I left a good job with you, Denis, if you remember! And I don't have to leave now!

Denis launched into memories of the past, the guys all persuaded Shalva not to boil and wait.

- Is he dissatisfied with the services of the attendants? – the cleaning lady, neatly dressed in a hotel overalls, asked from behind the open door.

- No, what are you! Denis reassured her.

- Otherwise, we accept any comments and wishes, - she said peacefully, - if you want, Boris, bring vodka with a snack, I can bring my friends here, we will stay with you at night.

Denis realized that Boris had already managed to talk to her and explain himself to the guide.

- Well, okay ... - Denis drawled meaningfully, - let them figure it out here, and we went to our place, Seryoga.

Denis and Sergey hurriedly left the room of their friends and went down to their room on the fourth floor.

Soon Boris and Shalva, who had a little rest, joined them.

- Guys, let's go to the city, - suggested Boris, - I know him well. Why hang around here and waste precious time.

- And what about the gathering of the whole group? Sergei recalled.

- Yes, perhaps we will not have time, - Denis supported him.

- Well, him, our guide, in the ass, - Shalva swore.

"Calm down, we'll still need it," Boris snapped at him.

- You can, and I'm coming home in two days!

- What about dinner?

- Uh, that in the city there is no where to eat?

After some hesitation, Denis decided to let the guys go to the city, and remain the defendant himself.

For the first visit, friends stopped at the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra.

- So! This is along Sichevogo Rebellion Street, "Boris remembered, and everyone headed for the right stop.

It was clear, sunny, but rather cool, winter weather, and there were still remnants of gradually melting snow. A young, athletic threesome of friends in insulated jackets, full of enthusiasm and enthusiasm, walked along one of the main streets of the Ukrainian capital. At the entrance to the reserve, their ardor, however, cooled somewhat. They carefully peered into the monastery walls, cast a glance at the Trinity Gate Church, walked past the cells, at the gates of which hung a metal plate with the inscription: "Exhibition of art products from precious metals of the 16th-19th centuries."

- Yes - ah, wow territory. So, you can't see everything as a savage, - Boris shook his head, - it would be nice to walk with a guide.

- Let's go for someone, - suggested Shalva, - there are so many people. They just roll over.

- Girls, are you locals or visitors? Boris threw. Women in their forties who passed them to the entrance.

- Well, listen, it's embarrassing! They are the same girls as I am the Chinese emperor, - Shalva refuted his appeal, - you don't see what a tall!

- And what? - with surprise asked one.

- Can I have you for a minute? I have a question for you!

Sergei went to the cash registers and, having talked with the attendants, asked for a guide.

- Officially, we do not have such a state, - one explained, - but we will try to find someone for you.

Another advised to look for some Volodya, while the third appeared five minutes later from behind the door to the next room with a young girl ..

- Here is our young employee Yulia, - she introduced the guest to a black-haired girl of about twenty-five, with regular strict features.

Sergey was stunned for a moment and lost the gift of speech.

"What a beautiful, Lord," Sergey was stunned ..

"Hello," he stuttered, still saying hello.

"Hello," the girl replied modestly.

- Show the reserve? We will not be in debt.

Julia, are you coming? one of the attendants asked.

- I'll go, - a little hesitant, agreed Julia.

Soon Sergei introduced his friends to his, he had already managed to mentally appropriate her, Yulia, and Boris, in turn, with his new acquaintances.

A small, hastily assembled tourist group listened with great attention to their young guide, examined the ruins of the Assumption Cathedral, the ciborium, the former governor's house, the building of the former Flavian library, which now housed an exhibition of N.S. Syadristy, the house of the Metropolitan, the buildings of the Annunciation and Mikhailovskaya churches, which have also now been converted into the State Museum of Ukrainian Folk Decorative Art of the Ukrainian SSR.

Next came the buildings of the refectory church with a refectory chamber, in which a concert hall was arranged.

- What blasphemy?! Sergei whispered in surprise in Yulia's ear.

- Soon, I think, many here will acquire their original appearance with God's help, - modestly but confidently she said.

We examined the graves of I. Iskra and V. Kochubey, the buildings of the printing house and bookbinding. We lingered at the mountain gates and the observation deck, Boris managed to take individual and general photographs with his old and reliable Zenith camera.

Time passed faster than a guided tour, a short winter day was approaching sunset, it was starting to get dark.

Boris and Shalva volunteered to see off their new acquaintances, who were in a hurry to go home, while Sergey stayed with Yulia, and they wandered around the remaining unseen territory a little more ... They found a common language quickly and even settled down a little to each other.

- How good are you here! Sergei noted.

- Yes, perhaps everyone here likes it, - Yulia agreed, a hairpin slipped from her hair gathered behind her, and they fell on her shoulders in a wave.

Sergei barely stood on his feet from this beauty, with difficulty restrained a groan that almost escaped. From hitting the ground, small crystal pebbles scattered from the pin.

- Ouch! Yulia exclaimed in anguish, bending down. - No, you can't see it! Lost!

- Wait, let's eat! Sergei leaned over, involuntarily touching her, he timidly and hesitantly hugged her palms with his own.

Julia did not recoil, which added courage to Sergei.

- Nothing, nothing, we will find and attach, - Sergey promised. - What gentle and nimble hands you have, Yulia, - poured out of his mouth, and he raised one of them to his lips.

- Don't, please, - as if Yulia came to her senses, carefully releasing her hand, - it's better to look for a joke.

With difficulty, but by common efforts, this was possible, and they slowly moved towards the exit.

Sergei spoke more than Yulia. He talked about himself, about his friends, about the country in which he lives, about relatives, in between he managed to ask Yulia and even cause her a short and ringing laugh.

Yulia turned out to be well-educated, well-read and deeply religious. She quickly discovered how Sergey swims in theology, was slightly disappointed, but nevertheless decided to mentally stretch out the rod to him. I thought: "If I can, I will try to pull him out of the fuss. No, I'll leave the rod."

Late in the evening, Denis persuaded his returned friends to all go and show themselves together.

"You are starting to become his right hand," Boris threw ironically, which Shalva readily confirmed.

- True Deng Xiaoping! And the beginning of the names match. So we give you the nickname Dan.

- Thank you! - also not without irony thanked Denis. Not without difficulty, he managed to soften Zaza and Shalva and relieve tension.

On the morning of the next day, the guys again dispersed around the city, who is with whom and who goes where.

Boris and Shalva went to meet their new acquaintances. Sergey is with Yulia, and Denis just went to walk around the city with a guide.

In the evening, everyone gathered for dinner in a restaurant, for which they earned the clear approval of the guide. He half jokingly - half seriously reminded that the trip was just beginning, that the most interesting and most important thing was ahead, urged to save moral, mental and physical strength for the future, to save and save internal strength, to show composure in order to successfully smuggle everything permitted and necessary across the border .

In the evening, in the room of Boris and Shalva, they made a game of preference, so that they even managed to draw into it an employee of the Academy of Sciences Kako, who gladly dared to take a break from the society your wife Leah.

Denis often held the lead in the top four players. Sergei did not play, but took on the role of an outside observer, something like a fan, rather even an instigator, for which he constantly received playful slaps on the back of the head, and he did not like it very much.

The beautiful Mzia visibly eschewed female society and was more inclined towards Dato and Giya, to whom she now headed after a light shower and toilet in the evening.

With them, she felt at ease, almost like a peer, and the guys, in turn, entertained her as best they could with extravagant, stunning tricks and stories. They competed with the throwing of push-button portable knives, and persuaded her to try her hand, to which she, after a little hesitation, finally agreed. But mostly they spent their free time in front of TV screens and empty conversations.

The departure for Hungary from Kyiv was scheduled the next day in the evening, and everyone hurriedly scattered around the city to finish started during the stay, and in the evening gathered at the hotel.

Sergei spent another interesting day with Yulia. The farewell kiss nearly knocked him off his feet, and just before his departure, he could not get rid of the thought of staying late and spending two weeks not in Hungary, but with Yulia in Kyiv.

- This is how it turns out in life, - Denis noticed after listening to his explanations, - towards the intended goal, they go astray much more often than they reach the goal. Some get off at the first one, some at the second, some at the nth stop, but the sweet, divine, cherished goal remains in the flow.

"If it goes on like this, I won't go either!" - Boris raged, - I'll stay here. Thankfully there is a reason!

Shalva almost choked with laughter.

The conversation was at the bus departing for the station with the doors wide open.

While waiting for the departure, Sergei decided to jump into the toilet and, in order not to go to his fourth floor, turned on the second, where the youngest in the whole group, Dato and Gia, lived. Through the door, wide open, there were signs of cleaning begun by two maids. On leaving, he noticed a woman, exhausted by numerous stab wounds, along almost the entire length of the bathroom door. There was no time to comprehend what was happening, he slowly went downstairs and did not immediately notice how the maid and the floor attendant rushing with abuse were on his tail.

Zaza and the others watched in horror as he ran away from the chase.

- Comrade Zaza, let's go, look what he did with the bathroom door on our floor,
- the maid rushed to the guide.

The clarification of the relationship took at least half an hour. I had to pay a substantial fine for damages so that they would not be handed over to the police and would not detain everyone, or even postpone the trip.

Zaza and Denis were nervous, it seemed to them that everyone was turning against them.

Zaza managed to find out who lived in this affected room, and during the whole tour he, very difficult and long, sought at least partial compensation for the damage from Dato and Gia. The group supported him.

- Why do we need such a new country and such new ones? - he turned with a question to Denis already in train 237, exactly

on schedule departed from the railway station, with the full composition of the group, fortunately for the guide.

- They have no control! You saw, Denis, with what arrogance and impudence they put pressure on me, and their girlfriend, a beauty, a sort of bitch, added fuel to the fire.

- Weak minds must yield, Zaza, - Denis reassured him, - you see, they are armed and very dangerous. Bear with them for another two weeks, and then the Almighty will reward everyone according to their deserts, but for now both mine and others express solidarity and support to you. Mine even cast aside doubts and decided to go for your sake.

- Thank you, - Zaza thanked, - yes, they are angels compared to these!

- Yes, we have, like everywhere else, some kind of thugs!

- Who owns the future of our country and the world!? Zaza thought.

- No, Zaza, no, calm down. Rely on the words of the Savior that blessed are the meek in spirit, for they shall inherit the earth.

Yes, but when will it be? - Zaza was upset.

- Soon! I assure you, very soon, - Denis consoled him.

The fast train rushed farther and farther from the capital of Ukraine, taking with it a group of tourists and a lot of indelible impressions from the ancient and eternally young city of Kyiv.

VIII

In the morning, leaving the train, the group reached the town of the private security company by bus. As we approached the border point, the excitement increased and reached its climax already at the point itself.

- So, guys, get your passports and documents, - Zaza announced, - you know the rules for transporting alcoholic beverages! Two bottles of wine and one bottle of vodka per brother.

- Avoye-ee, - Shalva drawled. - What will happen now!?

- What will happen? A big walk, with a shmon, - Sergey supported him.

"Not a walk, but a party," Boris corrected.

"Please remain calm," Denis urged.

- What can be peace! How much can I drink in one evening! Dato scoffed.

- And the remaining fourteen days, are we going to suck our paws? - supported his friend Gia.

Quieter, but other members of the group also objected.

- Calm down, friends hello, these claims are not against me, but against the customs control, but I will go and try to negotiate with him, - Zaza promised, - but for now, help me unload a few of the empty boxes piled one on top of the other at the end of the bus, behind the curtain, and fold extra bottles of liquor.

The buzz of objection grew.

- Guys, remember, our main task is to get through the border checkpoint not so much alcohol and the rest, but ourselves. Let's try to smuggle excess alcohol at the expense of non-drinking women.

- Not a bad idea, - Dato supported him, - after all, they are people too!

- Well, then, don't let the whole group suffer because of one!

- Zaza, you are a man, - Boris supported him.

- Don't be afraid, we'll break through! Shalva yelled.

- Slip through now, and there are ours! Sergei rounded off.

After protracted negotiations at customs, Zaza returned with one of the employees and with a small pile of clean, scribbled, but unfilled sheets of customs declaration with a long list of questions.

They began to fill while Zaza begged the customs officer for extra bottles.

They fussed and talked.

- And what to do with the chain? Boris asked. - To contribute or not? If I don't, I can get something for him there.

- It's not worth it, Boris, don't take risks, - Sergey warned him, - it's better to bring it in.

- That's okay, but what to do with the electric drill? Sergey got excited.

- I take over the electric drill, - Denis reassured them, - but as for electric kettles, electric coffee makers, I think we won't have any problems, because there are only one of them.

- Dito, I have ten jars of caviar in my bag, - his young sister Nino got excited.

"Put half of it into my bag," Dito advised her, "why can't we take everything with us – then five cans each?"

- What about electric mixers and irons?

- Vano, we have four binoculars for two, isn't it a lot?

"Maybe I'll have to get rid of one pair!"

- Guys, help me carry one powerful telescope!

- Of course we'll help!

- In Hungary, such nature, such stars shine at night. How can it be without him at all!

- Guys, could you attach a few irons to yourself, at least one for each?

- And double electric boots - warmers for both legs, for ice fishermen?

- And you have so many commander's watches and rulers!

After long negotiations with the customs officer, Zaza stayed on the bus for a while, and the customs officer went to the checkpoint to report on the preliminary situation.

- Guys, quickly and quietly redistribute the goods! So that everyone has a minimum. And without noise and dust!

- Zaza, you are our leader!

- Don't hurt us!

We were wrong, sorry!

The excitement came to a head when the returning customs officer told the driver to move the bus to the side for more thorough customs control by four customs officers.

Shalva has accumulated the most risky goods.

- Come on, guys, all the excess to me! Come on, I'm not afraid of them! I'll take over and be your lightning rod. It is better to let one suffer, that is, me, than the whole group or, God forbid, the whole country will be disgraced!

- Hello Augusto Pinochet, - the bus chanted, - we will not forget this service for you.

“Come, I’m not afraid of you,” Shalva mentally set himself up for the worst and turned with these words to the approaching customs officers, after checking the photos in the passport with his face, they began to inspect his bags, mostly clogged with other people’s goods, electronics for lumberjacks, an electric drill , electric kettle, electric mixers, irons, electric coffee makers, small portable color TV, audio player, tape recorders, VEF radiogram, gilded and silver parts of the service, red and black caviar, binoculars and much more!

The whole group went through more than an hour of customs control, except for Shalva, whom the customs officers took out of the bus with some of his belongings and took him to the checkpoint, to which Zaza and Denis followed him.

- Let's not get offended! - An angry bus chanted, and if it were not for the guide’s request to everyone to stay in their places, it is still unknown in what direction the indignation would have flowed.

- I saw your mother ... at the market, - Shalva cursed to himself, and Boris followed him in an undertone.

- Oh, my poor, unfortunate grandmother Rosa, damn it! She always advised me to stay out of trouble, - Shalva threw with an eye, moving away from the bus.

“Comrade major, they caught him red-handed,” the lieutenant of the customs control service reported.

- Yah?

-Well!

- What product? Smuggled, right? the major asked.

- No, it was included in the declaration, but ... a bit too much.

- Comrade major, well, you'll forgive me that before the trip I shaved off my mustache and lost a little weight, - Shalva justified himself in front of the major, who checked his passport data.

- What about gold? There is? he inquired.

- Where, comrade major, would it be, would not put on so much electric shit! Shalva disowned.

The Major chuckled.

- It's good! But remember, we will find, blame yourself!

- Please, comrade major, but if not, let me go?

The major with a glance indicated to the lieutenant to lead Shalva into a special a room for examination, where he was scourged in detail by three customs officers, including a girl in civilian uniform, who deftly interrupted his diplomat. The others felt the hat on his head, ransacked the pockets of his trousers and jacket.

The girl, examining a cardboard box, injured her finger.

It turned out that Shalva kept a disassembled safety in it, and foreign and too sharp razors rested in a special plastic case. One of the blades begged so invitingly, as if waiting for thin girlish fingers.

- Well, is it my fault? – justified Shalva. - You should have seen it yourself.

- Well, well, why does your jacket have so many pockets? What the hell are they?

They took him back to the Major.

- Well, how?

- Nothing? Just a random mini-incident.

- Get on the bus, we will decide what to do with you next!

“Whatever you want, then do it,” thought Shalva on the way to the bus, remove from the group. Please. I still didn't want to go. And in general, I overlaid the whole trip!”

After lengthy clarifications, an electric drill, an electric saw, an extra watch and an iron were taken away from him. The group also had to leave an extra couple of crates of liquor.

Morally and physically torn to pieces, Zaza's tourist group in full strength drove off from the customs control point already on a chic, new, small, fashionable Hungarian bus, in which they were met by a young Hungarian guide, a pretty woman of about forty, not tall, of an average appearance, with a good English and broken Russian.

- Alice, your guide in Hungary, - she introduced herself, - Zaza has already managed to tell me about your problems with customs. But do not worry, all this is behind us, and ahead is hospitable, hospitable and warm Hungary, which will give you many, long memorable days.

“We just missed you right now,” Shalva mumbled under his breath.

“That's nice, now our guide will not be bored,” Boris greeted her just as not loudly.

- Each creature has a pair, - Shalva grumbled, - it's better to return my electric drill and electric saw to me.

- Stop it, Shalva, they are not yours at all! Boris stopped him.

- Yeah? Do you guys think it's a pity?

- Where it is drunk, it pours there!

- Don't worry about drinking at all. Wow, they dragged away two full boxes, bastards, but I'm for them, maybe ..., - Shalva still grumbled.

IX

Hungary passed by the eyes of the travelers.

The first kilometers of the journey gradually absorbed the recently experienced negative emotions.

Winter in Hungary was quite warm and sunny. We peered at the floating views intently and attentively. Questions poured in.

- There are about twelve million of us, - Alice readily answered, - half in cities, half in villages. Our history is inseparably fused with the history of other European peoples, with thousands of related, economic and cultural threads. Bright and pale reflections of our history are visible in the history of almost all European peoples. Many of them took root in our modest corner of the earth, entered the family of European peoples. The very name of the Hungarians - Magyars means in ancient Hungarian "people", "man".

Believers are predominantly Catholics. A lot of tourists come, mostly in summer. We invite you in the summer.

Boris and Shalva looked at each other.

- Let's see what you have in the winter, - Shalva mumbled irritably, - and then we'll talk about the summer.

- Is it worse in summer at our resorts? Boris supported him.

- Where are you? In Hohland, or what? - Shalva faked it.

- Why in Hochland? On the Black Sea coast, - Boris specified.

- He was poisoned and polluted a long time ago, - Shalva corrected him, - Radioactive clouds from the Chernobyl disaster, they say, circled the globe three times and rained the same number of times. Expect mercy from them now.

- Like everyone else, so are we. Do not worry ...

- Do not mourn, mortal, yesterday's losses,

Do not measure today's affairs by tomorrow's measure,

Do not believe in the past or the future,

Believe the current minute - be happy now! - and calming the group and slightly boasting, in an undertone Dito read the poems of Omar Khaim.

"Well," said Zaza, his guide, "the true peace of mind, without which it is impossible to have a good tour, is achieved by coming to terms with even the worst.

- I will not reconcile, and I swear, I will reimburse my electric saw for lumberjacks in any way, - Dato stood his ground.

"Not at the expense of the Hungarians," Mzia asked him.

- The trip is just beginning, and I'm already so tired and tired of them, - complained Zaza.

- It's okay, Zaza, I'll help you, - Alice promised.

- I left some for them and the work of my family, but they don't care, they want to get their own from the trip!

"Like all of us in life," Alice said conciliatorily. - We are approaching the settlement of Nyiregy - haza, - Alice addressed the group, - take a look, comrades!

- The Tambov wolf is your friend, - Shalva muttered, - and our guide Zaza!

- Well, comrades, - Zaza picked up the words of his colleague, - will we stop here for breakfast or will we hurry to Debrecen, only a hundred kilometers from here?

Boris noticed at the bus station they were approaching a long Ikarus with the inscription "Sovavtotrans".

Zaza caught an animated Boris, whose eyes sparkled at the sight of a Soviet tourist bus.

- Guys, look at me, - Zaza caught and warned the whole four.

The first expenses began in a luxurious one-story building with a toilet, where the group rushed.

- Serge, you understand that what corresponds to our desires seems right, - Boris and Andre Maurois quoted with a laugh on the go, - and everything that contradicts them infuriates us.

Zaza and Alice sat in the parking lot bar over coffee, a cocktail, and a couple of light cakes. The female part of the group, which managed to refresh itself on the bus, was spinning around the stalls and counters. We bought some souvenirs, tourist maps, brochures.

Dato and Gia and the young doctors smoked over glasses.

- What order is everywhere, in a cafe-bar, in a restaurant, in a parking lot, bus station, shops! But the country is a socialist! So, it's not about the order, but about the people.

- And in their attitude to the environment.

- True, sometimes we see people and things like that. what we want to see them, but, on the other hand, why an unnecessary decoration, if, say, the building fully fulfills its function and in a more modest condition.

- How? Vano was surprised. What about the aesthetic side? No wonder the saying says that the human eye both eats and drinks! In addition, the attractive appearance of the country would discourage the desire to leave our country!

- Whoever does not like it, let them leave for their health!

- Do you like it yourself?
- What?
- What do you see in yourself, around you?
- Something you like, something you don't!
- So why not change at least what you don't like?!
- Because this is possible only through a complete and not partial transformation!
- Ah, you see, it means that they have taken up perestroika correctly!
- So after all, today it is a general directive, and not just ours.
- Don't confuse perestroika, perestroika is different. They have theirs and we have ours.

- How would it not end in trouble ?! A clear example and confirmation of this was the ninth of April last year in our country, and this is only the beginning.

But without a beginning there is no end! And what you start must be completed.

- To the bitter end!
- That's it.

- Well, what do you want and achieve? I will explain to you with a simple example: now we have a public toilet free of charge, with restructuring will be paid, you'll see! And not only this!

- So what? But this payment will help improve service, expand the infrastructure of production and various other facilities. And, in the end, this is not only in the interests of our great country! How long can you trail behind the entire capitalist world? Someday we must begin to forge our own future!

- Fu-u, truly, history teaches that it teaches nothing. All this has already happened in the past, and you can read how it ended in the history of different countries in the past.

.....

- Look, Sofiko, what gorgeous cosmetics! - Ketino's eyes widened.
- Yes, we are still far from such joys, - Sophiko agreed with her, but became depressed, - be silent. sad, shut up.

- Yes ... This, of course, is not the developed, capitalist Europe that we saw with you, but better than ours, - they shared their first impressions.

- Truly, happiness is not in being born a genius! It's about being born on time and in the right place. But in the same one you can see different things.

Soon the bus, ready to depart, was waiting for the two missing ones, Boris and Shalva, who finally showed up in the company of two young girls who escorted them to the very board. A few seconds were spent on seeing off, the last words of farewell,

handshakes, mutual kisses on the cheeks, and happy and joyful, with shining faces, Boris and Shalva flew into the departing bus.

The margin of safety in joy helped them meekly resist the remarks of the guide Zaza and Denis.

On the way to Debrecen, the four friends managed to play several games of king for a symbolic, minimum bet, but not for rubles, but for forints.

Most of all, the most unlucky Sergey lost, who in the end was tired of being a loser, and he deliberately made some changes in his favor, in the records. Friends discovered a catch and hit him with half strength, half a joke on the neck, on the back of the head and on the forehead.

“Help, the Academy of Sciences is being beaten,” Sergey called to his colleague, bending down, defending himself, albeit from comic, but weighty cuffs.

Take these with you on your trip!

- In gives! Denis was amazed at the invention. And what an honest guy he was!

- Here's to you, here's to you for lying! Boris and Shalva added to his neck.

Boris, for the first time losing in tandem with Sergei, hurried to take advantage of the situation, tore up a sheet of notes and threw it out the window according to a habit that had developed in his homeland.

“I didn't know that you were such avid gamblers,” Kako jumped up, “well, what about preference? Are you playing?”

- E! - exclaimed Boris, - how!

- Join us somehow, we just lack the fourth.

Kako immediately guessed who he intended to turn off from the composition, and looked towards Sergei.

- He is worse in preference fraer than in king.

- Kako, savior and colleague, don't mess with them, - Sergei whined, - these inveterate swindlers will beat you in no time, and it's a pity for your wife Leah. They will kidnap you from her!

- Well, we'll see about that! Okay, for the party!

- Yeah, come on!

- What a beautiful nature around, isn't it, Dito? – urged Niko, brother, to be more attentive and not hiding his admiration.

- Yes, - Dito philosophically drawled, - and really magnificent! Well, where else is she? Everywhere has its charms and its features. Marcus Aurelius at one time suggested imagining that you had already died and that you had lived, only up to the

present moment, and spend the remaining time of your life, as having fallen beyond expectation, in accordance with nature

- Yes, it was not for nothing that Ivan Pavlov called nature the second, after the Holy Scripture, the book of life, - Nino confirmed.

- Hmm, Dito chuckled, - do you know that St. Anthony the Great, one of the first desert dwellers, who could not read and write, created wonderful works, answers one philosopher who visited him in the desert, to the question of how he lives without philosophical books?

- What did he answer?

- He said that his book is nature and through it one can read the will of God and learn much more than is contained in books.

How deaf we are to her. We can be in the forest and not see the forest...

- In addition, not only animals, birds, fish, but also plants and even stones have their own language. You need to look at them carefully, look closely and listen, feel and feel them.

- And we rush forward without looking back, without thinking and without looking back at the past ...

- Yes, my dear, but if we look back, what will we see? After all, the history of the development of mankind is nothing but the history of warriors.

Dudin wrote well about the twentieth century:

Darkness over the past

Fog over the future

Humanity is mired in deceit...

Twentieth century, bloody age.

What have you done, man?!

Nino nodded thoughtfully.

- Look back at the past. There have been so many upheavals. You can also predict the future. It will not leave the rhythm of what is happening now. That is why Marcus Aurelius says that it makes no difference whether you observe life for forty or ten thousand years. He would, without or with unprincipled interest, look around today's our trams, buses, trolleybuses, cinema airfields, spaceports, electrical advertising ... Just think! Future!! It will be, like the present of each person, "IN THE SAME KIND AND WILL NOT GO OUT OF THE Rhythm of what is happening now." Of course, movement is not in the sense of movement, but in the sense of activity. Barriers give rise to thought, without them it would not exist. Diversity of food, family, social and

state way of life, way of settling the territory is a sign of a person and at the same time a condition for its emergence and development.

- Indeed, in order to hear nature, it is necessary to think about the sum of moments, that is, about the nature of time, - Nino agreed, - to rise above ordinary everyday life. Tell me more about Marcus Aurelius, she pleaded, I have already fallen in love with him and am beginning to regret that we have slightly diverged in time.

- Wow a little, - Dito chuckled, - the Roman emperor, the ruler of Rome, who ruled in the one hundred and seventies of our era. His manuscripts are already one thousand eight hundred and twenty years old.

You have good taste, sis! Beware of yourself, with your views you can stay in the old maids.

- Don't worry, I'm not in danger!

- At all times, life is homogeneous and uniform, and whoever saw the present, he saw the past and the future ... Ignorant is the one who marvels at something that happens in life, - he said, - sees ugly qualities, but remains a philosopher to the end, not wanting to interfere too much with the natural course of things.

- It's easier to blow up nature than to understand, - Nino intervened, - the naturalness of nature, the pace of its development are incompatible with human ones, although, I agree, everything should go its own natural course of development. Apparently, the pace of development of nature and man comes into conflict, which gives rise to conflicts. We inflict on nature

mortal wounds, and in response she takes revenge on us and responds in kind. Yes, perhaps it is not necessary to interfere in the natural course of things, events. Leo Tolstoy himself, giving an assessment of the wisdom of the great commander Kutuzov, noted that he allowed events to move and develop on their own, in turn, except that he helped them a little, pushed them in the right direction.

- Marcus Aurelius teaches the same! He proposes to do what nature requires of you at the present time, not to hope to realize the Republic of Plato, to be content with moving forward at least one step - and does not consider this step unimportant. Who can change the way people think? he asks. "And without such a change, there can be nothing but slavery and hypocritical obedience. He also offers a simple recipe for happiness: "Consider every moment of your life as the last." You should do everything, talk about everything and think as if every moment could be your last... For the longest life is no different from the shortest.

- Well, how to say, here I would argue with them ...

- Listen to you, Marcus Aurelius, can you stop philosophizing, huh? - Shalva, who was sitting at the preference, protested a little louder and more severely, - because of you, I'm on a minuscule, I have a big train. so to speak ... - throwing his deck of cards onto an impromptu table from a diplomat.

"Don't like it, don't listen," Dito snapped.

- Hesitated with his philosophy! Why did you come to Hungary, huh? Philosophize? Or boast that you know more than anyone?

At least not to play cards.

- You can philosophize at home!

- Play cards, by the way, too.

- Do you think it's the same thing?

- Almost, the guide came up and intervened, - do not quarrel, guys, over trifles, everyone is free to do their own thing, without interfering with others.

- Well, that's what I'm talking about, Zaza, - Shalva confirmed.

Dito also wanted to answer, but Nino stopped him.

- Serge, help! Tell me what to do, - asked Shalva, who was watching the game from Sergej.

- Shoot again and again, and you will hit right on target, - Sergey suggested, - and you will be more lucky.

- Where did so many philosophers fall on my head, I can't imagine, - Shalva was amazed, collecting the scattered cards of partners into a common deck.

"As if no one is talking on the bus except me," Dito grumbled, as if addressing his sister, while she did not take her eyes off the passing landscapes.

A high-voltage power line stretched all along the way, thrown from one massive, metal lattice pole to another.

- And what are those balls on the wires, Alice? - a voice was raised from the back seats of the bus by Rusiko and Manan.

- Aw, gallery! Boris encouraged them and burst out laughing.

- Walk with a horse, Shalva, root, - teased Shalva, returning to the cards Sergey.

- Shut up, sadness, shut up, - Shalva muttered, - they say, if there is no move, go with diamonds. Well, if so... - Shalva threw one of his tambourines.

- The fact is that we do not always have such warm and friendly winters, which Hungary greeted you in a friendly way. Often there are bad weather, snow, ice, winds that cause great damage to the line. Therefore, dynamic vibration dampers appeared on the tracks. They reduce the amplitude and frequency of oscillations and prevent accidents on power lines, - said Alice.

- Avoye ... - Shalva drawled, - how fabulous! I didn't know!
- About what? Boris asked his friend.
- That these eggs are called dynamic vibration dampers.
- First of all, they are a symbol of life, - Sergei threw up.
- Healthy!
- How long does it take to get to Debrecen? - Manana closed the topic.
- For a long time, for a long time, - Shalva teased her in an undertone, - until we close the bullet!

- No, not so much! Alice peered through the front window of the bus at the road.
- We're already moving in! she exclaimed after a while. – To the administrative center of Hajdu-Bihar county, to one of the largest cities in the region.

-What? Faid? Shalva put his hand to his ear.

- Yes, Kaidu, - Alice almost agreed with him, - It comes from the word "hajduk", in Hungarian "hajdu". Debrecen has about 200,000 inhabitants. developed mechanical engineering, metalworking, chemistry, pharmaceuticals., clothing, food, furniture, leather business, - listed Alice. – There is a university, one of the largest in the country, medical, pedagogical and agricultural institutes. An interesting and beautiful, small town, as you will soon be able to see for yourself.

- So, friends, listen to me now! and carefully, - Zaza took up his business, - we have two options for staying in this city.

-Alice promised to take us around the city, show the sights. But you can choose your own leisure. Those who wish can come with us. In any case, meet here at the bus station in, say, three hours. Is it coming? Zaza announced.

"Let's go," the group replied in unison.

"Idiot," Shalva muttered in an undertone.

- Yes, what happened to you? Denis was outraged.

- Apparently, alcohol insufficiency, "Boris suggested. - Afraid of us.

On the very approach to the bus station, Boris was the first of the group to notice another Soviet bus with an inscription on board "Rosselmash", which is why his eyes flashed brightly again, as before, and he lost his peace.

- Ha, "capture group", look at me, so that without delay and nonsense! - Zaza warned the four friends who escaped, past him on the steps of the bus.

- Don't worry, boss, everything will be all right! Shalva promised with a laugh.

- Denis, look after them, - Zaza hurried to take the guarantees.

There were not so many who wanted to keep Zaze and Alice company, only Kako and Leah, and they soon slipped away.

- See, Alice, how they love me and want my company! Zaza exclaimed bitterly.

- You won't be sweet for strength, - Alice answered in a slightly broken Russian, laughing, - I know your feeling.

- Well, since we have a similar fate, maybe we will switch to you? Zaza suggested. - Tell us a little about yourself...

Alice smiled, there was nothing special, in her childhood and in her youth she dreamed of many things, but she got what she had.

- You're not happy?

- How do you say? Yes and no.

They are slow. unhurried step, walked along one of the main streets of Debrecen, starting gradually, peering into each other.

- She played the piano well, danced, went in for sports ... How naive we are in our youth!

- Yeah! And what of the dreams managed to be realized?

- Very little, believe me!

What is the purpose of a person in life?

- In order to be realized, probably ...

- To each in his own way?

- Yes, of course, but for any woman, it is probably important to start a family and raise children.

- I did not dare to ask about it, but since we are talking, how did your personal life develop?

- How did it work out? No way! There was a guy in the past, because of him she left home, from her parents, although here in general, unlike you, children leave their parents earlier and arrange their own personal lives, but still it's good when this happens good, no quarrel. Usually such separations, and not only with parents, end in failure. A person loses both those from whom he leaves, and those to whom or to whom he comes. The latter can only be a matter of time.

"And how do you know our customs?" Zaza asked.

Alice looked at him carefully and smiled.

- I heard a lot from yours, because I have been working as your guide for more than a year.

- Oh, yes, - Zaza realized, - it really happens that parents take care of their children all their lives.

- Do you think it's good?

- In everything that happens around us, there is both a no and a yes at the same time. What happened to your chosen one?

- Nothing! Alice waved. - We lived together for two years and parted, did not agree on the characters.

- Lost each other?

- Well, in that initial sense, maybe yes, but so, when we meet, we greet, sometimes we even exchange a couple of words.

- And did not try to connect their fate with others?

- Yes, it happened a couple of times, but to no avail.

Passed by the kindergarten. In warm weather! The children were taken out to play in the yard.

We stopped at the fence to watch the kids.

- Funny!

- Yes! This is what we look like as adults. It's more visible from the side.

- And besides, if in pride we consider ourselves smarter than them, then they have the right to consider themselves cleaner and better.

- A person is born naked and happy, in the image and likeness of the Creator, but what, - he remarked sadly Zaza, what does life do to us?

- No, life, but we ourselves, - Alice grinned, - do not blame our weaknesses and laziness on life, unwillingness to always and everywhere take care of ourselves, fight with ourselves. To this we prefer the struggle with life and with other people.

- A person gets tired of life, of waiting, of failure!

The children, under the supervision of the teacher, merrily pulled the rope until one of the parties collapsed to the ground and let go of the rope from their hands.

- It happens in life the same way, - noticed Alice, - we are all doomed to fall and fall. Fall is inevitable, but some fall in defeat, others in victory. And do you think there is a difference?

- Yes! Perhaps there is a difference, Alice.

- Is it?

- Look at that boy, - suggested Zaza, - how carefully he does it.

A handsome little boy, slowly, carefully stretched out on a long green bench and bent in one direction and in the other side of a steel wire twig until it broke at the point of inflection. He gave half to his comrade, who was attentively observing his actions and patiently waiting for his piece, and kept the other half for himself. Soon they went about their business together.

“We could learn from them, wouldn't we,” smiled Alice, continuing along the fence, “if not for our pride and blindness.

- Children are a joy, yes! Zaza agreed with her.

- Do you have them?

- Total. Unfortunately, one daughter, - Zaza said sadly, - and it could have been more, if not for a fatal mistake, when my wife and I decided at first to live for ourselves for some time, we abandoned the second child, well, now it's not given.

- Yes, well, everything is still ahead!

- Do you value your wife?

- How to say, now more important duties that crowd out the original feelings. We cannot live now without a daughter.

- You see! What a joy it is to have children from loved ones. I think we agree with men on this, even though we have a harder time. Well, why? It's not always so! Zaza objected hotly. – It is up to you who to make happy and who not. My wife is not my first chosen one, before her, many refused me ...

- Nonsense all this, Zaza! A man with a strong desire and perseverance can achieve any woman. It's just a matter of time.

The conversation continued over coffee and cakes.

- Are you disappointed in men, Alice?

- No, not quite yet. I am still the former naive fool and I am waiting for the man of my dreams, although I have already formed a certain opinion ...

- Yes ... Curious, what is it? - first looked into the eyes of Alice Zaza and suddenly found that they were blue and very shiny.

“If you look at me like that, I won't tell you anything,” Alice looked away embarrassedly.

- Well, well, well, - Zaza laughed.

- In principle, I divide men into two categories, some believe that girls need money to be completely happy, and others that sex, representing us as simple, greedy females.

Has the holy word "love" become just an empty phrase? So we will die out soon. There are no dinosaurs and mammoths among us now!

- By the way, I don't know about mammoths, but one of the reasons for the extinction of dinosaurs is that they stopped dating for some reason.

But where, where does love disappear? Why does it burn so brightly and furiously at first, and soon it begins to choke and go out?

- Apparently, because we do not throw firewood on time.

- But why don't we throw it up?
- It must be, nothing can be done without Him. - Zaza fixed his gaze upwards.
- It turns out that we will not be able to love without Love for a long time, if not until the end of our lives?
- Maybe...
- You know, no offense will be said, but it seemed to me that men are people from another planet, speaking a different inner language, and that disagreements with them are interference in translation.
- Happiness is a boomerang that flies and returns. We'll fix it, Alice! It's just that a woman's heart is constantly looking for a holiday, and in everyday gray life this is not always achievable.
- I can not forgive men of betrayal and deceit. He leaves, let him leave, this is the right of a man, but he is obliged to remain honest and truthful to her to the end.
- They say that it is fitting for a true man to obey, even when it was not he who offended, but she.
- Oh! Does this happen anywhere and with anyone?
- How I like such neat little towns. Look, Kako, what nice two-three-story houses, with front gardens and courtyards, - Leah could not restrain her admiration.
- “You don't understand, Leah, then you want to live in the upper floors of the buildings, closer to the sky, then squat houses closer to the ground,” Kako reminded his wife.
- You never understand me. Unfortunately, we don't have such beautiful, well-groomed houses, so it's better to have them in buildings. In general, the houses in which people live affect them, right?
- Oh, still! Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky himself wrote that low ceilings and cramped rooms crowd the soul and mind of a person.
- Why not build such houses in our country?
- Well, the problem of high-rise buildings, you know, the problem of the territory. In addition, in our villages, too, no - no, yes, good houses of this type come across.
- But not like that! And what, Hungary is much larger than our country?
- Well, here, Of course, taste, character, customs are visible, and you have never been to any of them. You don't know what they are inside.
- And right! let's ask them.
- Lost her mind?! And what language are you going to speak?
- Yes, - Leah thought, - you will need to ask Alice.

The bus, ready to depart, again waited for the three missing members of the group.

- Again, the “capture group” is letting us down, - Zaza was nervous .. Well, where are they, Sergey? I asked you not to be late. Do you have to drive in the dark?

- They'll do, Zaza! They're just about to come, - Sergey was also worried, looking out the window.

- I hoped for Denis, but he was letting me down too, - I got more and more annoyed, how many divers in my group?

Soon, indeed, three friends appeared in the distance, accompanied by three accompanying girls.

How do they manage in such a short amount of time? Zaza wondered.

X

He suggested that, in order to lift the spirits of the departing, to sing something of their own, different. Among other things, he wanted to brag to Alice and, moreover, quickly show her his group at least from some positive side. They sang all the way, and towards the end they went dancing. Shalva and Boris managed to dance in the narrow aisle between the seats of the shalakho. Others joined in as well. Shalva is not without effort, but involved in the dance and Alice. The newly formed trio of Dato, Gia and Mziya turned out better and more provocatively than everyone else.

“So it means they can be good,” Zaza stated to himself, “but the devil knows how they behave”

When we drove up to the town of Szolnok, Alice set to work and gave a brief, somewhat dry information, listed enterprises, which turned out to be quite a lot for seventy-five thousand inhabitants, along with machine-building also pulp and paper, and food, and agricultural. She said that we would stay at the Pelican Hotel for a few days. And tomorrow, if you wish, we can go in the opposite direction to the market, which she mentioned and where you can sell something, if you can find it.

- Hooray! the group shouted in unison.

- Well, okay, let's go, - promised Alice.

- Guys, I'll ask you to behave civilly, - Zaza asked, - and now, landing, get ready for landing!

The low snow-white Pelican Hotel, brightly lit by mini spotlights, immediately captivated everyone with its brightness and neatness, cheered up and noticeably cheered up.

The whole evening they settled, settled down, ran to each other, exchanged their first impressions of Hungary.

True, the evening was slightly overshadowed by an unpleasant incident due to the fact that Zaza was forced to settle his friends, doctors Vano and Kote, in different rooms.

Kote protested most actively.

- So you did with us in Kyiv, and now here, - he objected, - meanwhile, as we agreed to a trip to be together, because after distribution we get to different enterprises.

Discontent grew like a snowball and drew in more and more people.

"The forgetfulness of a person is amazing," Zaza tormented, "I stood up for you all the time, and now you are ready to run over me. You might think that this is my own hotel and I personally manage the rooms. Well, at least Alice has left and does not see all this mess.

The first to defend Zaza were Kako and Leah.

- Zazu will not be offended! they said emphatically.

They were supported by the "capture group", which agreed to give up their compactness in order to restore peace.

Kako that evening stayed in the room of Boris and Shalva, where the first atmosphere of preference took place, at first without the participation of Sergei, who lingered in his room, indulging in memories and appeared at the end.

The same type of recreation was chosen by his neighbor in the room, a Hungarian buried in a fat woman, with whom they communicated, if necessary, with the help of a smile, facial expressions - gestures.

"Maybe I should have stayed in Kyiv," he thought, remembering the time spent with Yulia.

Warmth spread throughout his body and soul.

"How tender, pure, crystal and ..."

He first met and met a girl who so captivated, bewitched, "nailed" him to her. He was puzzled by the mystery that permeated her. She attracted with her mind, soul.

"And they also say that an attractive appearance and insides do not get along, especially among women," he objected hotly to someone in his mind. For a long time he fidgeted on the bed dressed. There were also doubts and torments. He was both glad of his privacy in the room, and tormented by it. Something rolled in his head, did not have time to pour into thoughts, and he decided to trust the paper, which resulted in the following message:

“Yulechka, dear, forgive me for importunity, but I can’t not write to you now, and therefore I am writing, although I don’t know whether I dare to send you this letter or leave it as a keepsake. Or maybe in the morning I’ll tear it up and throw it away, as one of the heroes, of one of Vasily Shukshin’s famous story “Two Letters”, although a similar offense was caused by a different reason. As for me, I’m afraid to scare you with my excessive sensitivity, which sometimes harms folding relationships and the waves of which roll over my soul with greater and greater force, pulling me into their waters. I’m sorry that I’m writing to you in this Russian, but I don’t know Ukrainian, and I don’t want to give a letter for translation to my friend Boris. Excuse me for taking some liberties, and also for the fact that I am me, and not someone else, but more on that later. I am very grateful to you for your trust in me and for your sincerity. It is very good that you decided on such a bold act in relation to an unfamiliar person. I promise that you will not be disappointed in your hopes and expectations. There are many things I would like to tell you and share, but I don’t know why.

start and how to calm down and streamline your feelings, thoughts and words. I find myself doing this much better and more fully in writing than in conversation. I can’t speak the way I write. And maybe that’s why I decided to write now. I promise to be a gentleman to the end towards you.”

“But why only in relation to her? – doubt crept in. - What about others? Nothing, everyone deserves,” he cut himself off and went deep into introspection.

“I am ready to take into account all your opinions and at the same time I hope for an answer. Yulechka, if you knew how much I want you and me to understand each other. I understand the meaning of every word that comes out of my mouth, although it may not always be properly controlled. But nevertheless... So, in case of some omissions and mistakes, I also count on your condescension and favor.

It is a well-known rule to respond with kindness for kindness and sincerity for sincerity, so I will sincerely tell you that when I communicate with you, I believe that I communicate with myself.

I was literally amazed at our coincidences, both socially and spiritually, even though we are complete opposites according to the zodiac and horoscope, and, moreover, I even feel some astral connection.

I wonder what are you doing now? .

Julia, meanwhile, made fun of her naivety and wrote to him herself:

"Dear Sergey, it will probably seem strange to you, but I decided to answer you a letter that you did not write to me and which I did not receive."

“Yes, get him out of your head,” she recalled the loud words of her girlfriend, Svetka, “he is Caucasian and will deceive you like a drink. Are you going to exchange your Igor for him?”

“How much I would not like to be mistaken in you, to be mistaken in my feelings and disposition towards you, although I know why in most cases young guys go on such long pleasure trips, hunting, for various game, no matter what tailoring. But I don’t think so of you, otherwise I wouldn’t be writing an answer to a non-existent letter.

“I would very much like, in any case,” Sergei continued his message, “so that you do not suffer another disappointment, although, to be honest, the feeling that they are disappointed in you is much more painful.

What can you do, certain peculiarities, elitism, depth of the cognizable are sometimes accompanied by pauses from separation or silence ... turn into a burden, then a benefit, contrary to assertions that silence is the ideal of communication.

Not everyone has the patience, or even the time to go through the corridor to the end, the labyrinth of social secrets of the knowable, behind which, as a rule, the highest reward for a person awaits the seeking pilgrim - the joy of human communication and discovery, both in science, and in life and in to the person himself. Every person is a kind of unique, world, galaxy, universe, and contact with the new, unknown and mysterious found in the search is such a sweet feeling and spiritual pleasure, which is difficult, and sometimes impossible to refuse. And it was not for nothing that Bernard Shaw expressed confidence that by exchanging apples, two people receive one each in material terms, and two fruits in social terms.

I know perfectly well how deceitful and vain every person is, - Yulia continued, - that no one. except for the Lord, one cannot rely and hope, but what can we do if we, people, are created for each other, for love, kindness, mutual understanding, if each of us is asked on the day of God’s own judgment. what we have done to each other and for each other. Silence is golden, but sometimes we are so drawn to the rumor,

considered the beginning of all evil, contrary to the advice of the wise elders who call for salvation.

How strange, isn’t it, that a person is actually flying towards his own destruction, despite the fact that the forces of good persistently and diligently impel us to salvation. Unfortunately, you don’t go to church, but we light candles there, share fire, that is, love, and from the warmth it does not become impoverished, but, on the contrary, it flares up more and more and becomes brighter and happier from it.

"It has already happened in my life," Sergei continued in the meantime, that by the will of fate or by my own stupidity, I became the owner of many awards, certificates, diplomas, which, to tell the truth, didn't really bother me, because the greatest joy of the soul for me there is and will be communication with friends and relatives, and the more it is, the more urgent the need for it.

I would very much like, Julia, to find a good friend in you. I don't even dare to dream of more, knowing that such a beautiful and kind person cannot but be surrounded by many friends and admirers, so you don't have to look far for them.

Sorry to take up your time, but I hope for a real, close friendship. And I ask for one more thing. Do not judge by first impressions, the window is often deceptive. Write me. Will wait".

He put the letter aside, glanced askance at his neighbor, who was dozing over the newspaper, carefully stretched himself and turned off both desk lamps, his neighbor's and his own, under the dim, matte light from the ceiling, folded the letter in four. I thought: "If I don't get up now, then I'll fall asleep, and I'll have to stay awake at night," got up, made the bed, looked in the bathroom mirror and quietly slammed the door behind him.

"It's amazing, but for some reason people are drawn to the words and thoughts of outstanding, outstanding personalities, despite the fact that even those consciously or subconsciously relied heavily on their predecessors. Therefore, the Creator himself is their primary source, "Yulia was completing her answer meanwhile. "I must admit that although I have many friends who are very close to me in spirit, something mysterious and unknown draws me to communicate with you and there is a hope that I am not deceived in my hope for our mutual understanding ... "

"Maybe you shouldn't write about it? - she was embarrassed in her soul, but immediately consoled herself, remembering: - I won't send a letter anyway ... "

"I know, I know how at the beginning of the desired communication everyone tries to show their best side, leaving everything negative in the shadows. I recently wrote in a poem:

When love is at its peak
Then they suddenly rise to the surface
Other, worse traits
And sometimes it's not easy
Falls to know your star.

She suddenly felt fear that a certain Igor would not know about these lines, and an irresistible determination to tear up the letter, burn it, dispel it and forget it.

“You don’t joke with this, Julia.” - She suddenly heard a quiet voice from the depths of her soul. Obeying him, she turned her gaze back to the letter.

“On this, perhaps, I will stop, I will wait for your answer. Your Julia,” she thought, removed the words “from you” and the letter “and” from her name and put a date at the end.

“There is nothing for you to do,” her friend Sveta will tell her later, having heard her confession in the “answer” to Sergey.

- Oh, - Shalva drawled, saw Sergey entering, - Vints movida, gaumardzhos.

- Where are you, Serge, still sleeping, or what?

- Leave him alone, he, unlike us, is engaged in business, - Denis beat the cards of his partners.

- What? What's the deal? Boris was surprised.

- He fell in love with that khokhlushka, remember? Shalva laughed.

- You yourself are a hohlushka! Sergei snapped.

“Serge, my dear, help me out,” Kako suddenly pleaded, “these shameless ones are beating me.

“Uh,” Sergey drawled, “I told you, Kako, and advised you not to mess with them, but you didn’t listen to me, and now, as you know.

- How didn't I help you when they hit you on the bus? – jokingly, recalled Kako.

- Helped, helped, how, - Sergey agreed, - well, okay, so be it, I'll go to your fans, - he sat down closer to the players.

1. Greetings to the one who came.

The battle continued until late at night. Sergey was peeping at the partners' cards, suggesting Kako's moves. And it all ended with the fact that they were jokingly beaten with Kako and put out the door.

- So, Sergey, if we, the employees of the Academy of Sciences unite, we will be invincible, - Kako shook hands with Sergey in parting.

- The union of the sword and the plowshare, we will not surrender alive, the dead will not be taken, they will not pass us, - Sergey answered him with a laugh.

The hotel and those living in it plunged into night slumber and darkness.

XI

The next morning, neither light nor dawn fell like snow on Alice's head. Hastily and frantically getting ready and not soon having breakfast, the tourist group went to a flea market near the city of Szolnok. They took something with them, for sale or exchange.

The situation on the market for sellers and buyers turned out to be the most favorable, except for one detail. The sellers had to pay twenty forints for a place at the counter and for the seller. This amount, although small, still scared away many, and therefore, by agreement, they decided to stand two at a time, and the goods, naturally, crowded and squeezed. Nevertheless, trading was brisk, and the first hours were very successful.

In addition to the wandering Soviet merchants, Polish traders roamed the market and wielded, not yielding laurels of superiority to random and passing traders.

- What do you have, friend, some water? the Pole asked Boris from behind a nearby counter.

- What more water! Boris was outraged. - This is chacha.

"Ah! Cha-cha-cha," the Pole sang joyfully.

- Yes, cha-cha-cha, - Boris understood him, - if you want, try it!

"Bevri ar daalevino magas, ar mokvdes," Shalva warned Boris, laughing.

With a knife, Boris carefully removed the plastic cap from the half-litre bottle, poured a hundred grams of pervacha from a double turn to the Pole.

- Oh, cha-cha-cha, - the Pole immediately noticed rings on the surface of a transparent liquid.

"It can be seen that he is an expert in this matter," Boris thought, "he understands."

- Oh, cha-cha, - the Pole turned his nose away from the glass, - he closed his eyes, held his breath and gulped the rest of its contents in one gulp.

- Fu-u, - he drawled, grimacing, - good cha-cha!

- Yes, good, good, would I bring rubbish here?

The Pole called his buddies, who bought all the vodka from Boris at a hundred forints per half liter. Denis managed to quickly sell his monocle for four hundred forints. Zaza bailed out three hundred forints for the Elektronika watch, which Kako sold him. One hundred forints to him

got for a can of instant coffee, and another three hundred for a one hundred and forty gram tin of red caviar.

Dato and Gia sold an electric drill for four thousand forints.

The female half of the group successfully had kitchen and bathroom towels, various underwear and rags, and gold pieces for jewelry.

The guys successfully sold gilded and silver-plated devices.

Shalva stood upset, no one showed any interest in his various watches. As a result, he left them with his other little thing and went to walk around the rows and free territory of the market with a Zenith E camera hanging from his neck and, in between times, photographed his comrades at the counters and trays.

- Wait, I'll bring these crooks to clean water! he laughed, turning to Sergei, who, out of embarrassment behind the counter, threw the goods at Denis.

The groups also traded cassettes from BASF, TDK, SONY audio recorders. Portable stereo tape recorders and stereo headphones worked well. Rusiko and Manana showed a wealth of experience, their next trip turned out to be very profitable for them.

1. A lot, do not give him, if he does not die. (cargo.)

- And experience, the son of difficult mistakes, - Zaza quoted.

- Yes, apparently, this is not their first trip, or they stocked up with valuable information before leaving, - suggested Alice.

Reputable women successfully traded in sports uniforms, bags, boots from well-known foreign companies Adidas, Puma, etc. There were different shoes.

Alice and Zaza walked along the rows and simply marveled.

-Zaza, they have so many different goods that it is not clear what they got the money for.

- You were taught, probably, the formula commodity-money-commodity?

- Yes, but I think they could exchange different goods with each other with great success, make a lot of barter deals.

- Well, maybe they just want to hold a lot of foreign, even Hungarian, currency in their hands.

- But for what?

- And we will learn about this in more detail later, I can say: in order to spend them on the time of transmission, various other purchases. Maybe they are preparing for Budapest, because at the border, the customs exchanged only twenty rubles.

- Well, okay, let's say, but what time are Rusiko and Manana thinking about?!

- Who knows! They don't listen to me very much, and I don't particularly want to restrict them in anything other than illegal actions. In addition, in our country such a

free sale is not practiced, but apparently there is some kind of romance in it, buy-sell, buy-sell! Man is a merchant by nature. And in order to buy a lot tomorrow, you need to sell a lot today! They also say that money should be made not with labor, but with money.

- Don't you love doing this? Alice asked.

- Well, it's somehow embarrassing and not to my liking, although I wouldn't refuse extra forints either.

Shalva managed to click them a couple of times talking nicely.

- Oh, well done, Shalva, mind you, one photo for me, another for Alice, - asked Zaza. - Absolutely, - promised Shalva and thought: the city executive committee in the KGB, so that they know with whom you are flirting and walking with a foreigner here.

As he did so, he noticed that then the commanding hours were going well!
Annoyed:

"Sorry, I dropped it in the toilet"

Demand for electrical goods was extraordinary all three days.

There were irons, electric mixers, coffee makers, electric kettles...

On the third day, the insulated double boots for ice fishing were also sold.

Dito and Nino traded mainly in various trifles, vintage red domestic wine, instant coffee, sealed in jars of red and black caviar, at four hundred and fifty forints for a tin, and a thousand for a couple of glass ones.

By the end of the third day, Shalva managed to drive his legendary camera "Zenith E" for two thousand forints, and before that he snapped off and developed several films, which were extremely successful.

Denis and Boris have not had a chance to part with the same cameras of theirs yet.

All three days of stay in Szolnok were spent on market trade, and in the evenings they had fun in whatever way they could, mainly in the Pelican Hotel.

The third day of trading turned out to be the most difficult, when most of the members no longer had the strength or patience to stand idle at the counters half-empty.

- We and our country most likely have the same future as the Poles, - Sergey suggested, - life is trade.

- And today Poland is the most backward in Europe, - Denis reminded.

- This is not Lenin in Poland, - Shalva teased the guys.

“Uh, let them allow buying and selling, and we ourselves will somehow feed ourselves,” remarked Boris.

- Even if everyone does it? Shalva asked.

- Do you know what the competition will be like? Denis breathed out. “It won't be a Solnok flea market.

At Denis and Boris, but in the meantime, BT cigarettes went for one hundred and fifty forints per block, despite the fact that Shalva showed farsightedness in this matter and then helped out in stores up to two hundred and forty forints for the same one.

Sergei sold a couple of jars of Brazilian instant coffee for one hundred and fifty forints each.

“Give me back my electric saw for lumberjacks or compensate me for its loss,” Dato and Giya pestered with their claims.

Mzia traded next to the guys mainly women's underwear and branded shoes.

Kako and Mziya sold their portable color television and remote-controlled video player well.

Vano and Kote were fond of selling electrical goods. Ketino and Sofiko, besides other trifles, tried to sell a couple more table and tea sets, however, with difficulty even by the end of the third day of trading.

Only Alice and Zaza were distracted from trading, who attached his poor goods to Kako and Leah. They themselves spent these days talking and enjoying each other, making small excursions both around the city of Szolnok and near and around the market.

By the second half of the third day, new sellers appeared next to Boris, also Poles, who offered him moonshine.

We bought it from our friends. Try how tasty and sweet it is, - suggested a new neighbor on the counter.

- So this is my vodka! I sold it on the first day of trading, - having drunk, Boris was amazed, - cha-cha!

- Oh, yes, Polish cha-cha, - the Pole confirmed, - cha-cha-cha is good. In!

- The Poles give me money, huh?! They treat me to my vodka, and even pass it off as their own!

Boris called for an impromptu table at the counter of his friends. Soon Shalva, already under the influence of either Polish or Borisova cha-cha-cha, was muttering something in the toilet.

Only after sleeping for a few hours and taking a nap on the bus, the players completely recovered and sobered up, but not for long, because on the last evening at the Pelican Hotel in Szolnok, the guys gathered in one of the rooms for several bottles of vodka and wine and a simple snack.

Zaza declined the invitation, saying that he needed to escort Alice to the city tourist office, where she spent the entire four nights of her stay in Szolnok.

The evening turned out to be quiet, calm and passed in a cheerful and interesting conversation without disputes and excesses. Many were photographed with the Zenit camera, which Boris and Denis still had. True, by the end of the gatherings were not without commotion.

Moderately tipsy friends from the "capture group", left at the end of the four, still did not want to part with each other.

Denis and Boris persuaded Shalva and Sergey to stay overnight in their room, on a sofa or folding chairs.

- No, I want to rest in my bed and on my bed, - Sergey resisted.

- And I, - Shalva supported him.

After some bickering and persuasion, Boris suggested that both of them drag their beds from the upper floors to their room and spend the last night in the city of Szolnok together, to which they received - the same consent.

Sergei at the last minute either forgot about his promise, or changed his mind, or was generally too lazy, but, once in his room in front of his bed, he hardly took off his outer clothes, collapsed on the bed and immediately fell into a deep sleep.

Shalva, who nevertheless had much more experience, strength and endurance behind him in such matters, considered it worthless to forget a promise, not without difficulty rolled his bed into a plump roll, put it on his shoulder and went down.

He failed to call the elevator.

- Oh, look, what important people are, they turn off the elevator, apparently so that tourists do not run to each other at night, - he suggested, - that's idiots, as if there are no stairs in the building.

Slowly, under the weight of the roll, going down the stairs, he made fun of the administration in his mind and did not notice how he came across a girl and a guy who kissed her on the neck and on the back of the head.

- Well, here, - he mumbled in an undertone, - and what did I say!

Before falling asleep, they talked for a long time, waited for Sergei, Denis argued that our whole life, for each in his own way, "buy and sell", Boris fully agreed with E. Hemingway's idea that our whole life is a bed, Shalva argued that all "our life is a

game”, Sergei, in a dream, walked with Yulia along the embankment of the Dnieper and his mouth and soul said that life, if not love, then its relentless search.

- Our whole life is a theater, - Zaza reminded famous words, Alice, - and we are actors in it. Who are successful, and who are outstanding.

The next morning, preparing the group for departure from Szolnok, Zaza, like a mother hen, called the "chickens" on the list,

walked around the rooms, checked if everything was in place. Knocking, he looked into the room of Denis and Boris. Waking up, Denis jumped up on the bed, at first he did not even recognize the newcomer, he rubbed his eyes.

He was sobered up, however, by a cold, familiar voice:

- Denis, we have an emergency!

“Yes, there is no face on him,” Denis was alarmed.

- Exactly, he has no complexion, - Denis stated in his mind. - What is it?

- Everyone is in their places by their numbers, but I can't find Shalva. Lost somewhere along with his bed.

- It can't be, - Denis reacted unconsciously, somehow mechanically. - Where was he supposed to go?

- I don't know, - Zaza responded in a frightened, almost trembling voice.

Denis caught himself and squinted at the sofa. Zaza followed his gaze.

- Did he spend the night with you? – inquired cautiously.

Denis lightly, but not without fear, nodded his head.

- Where is he now? Zaza was surprised.

"I don't know," Dennis shrugged.

Zaza rushed to the toilet, but immediately turned around and looked around, frozen and listening.

- One two three four! One two three four! came a low voice from the balcony.

Denis jumped out of bed, abruptly parted the dark blue curtains, and ran out onto the balcony. Zaza doesn't rush after him. Shalva, wearing only swimming trunks, crouched, jumped up, spread and brought his hands together, counted the movements.

- Hey bosses! - he cheerfully greeted Zaza and Denis, - a good morning dawned, didn't it? With frost!

Zaza looked at Denis with surprise and even indignation:

- So that in half an hour the whole four will go down to the bus. Otherwise, we'll leave without you, and deal with them yourself. I don't have enough nerves for him,” he rushed to the door and slammed it behind him with a thud.

- Freckled rise! - Boris approached the bed, - and you, Shalva, let's get ready, in half an hour the meeting is at the bus.

-What's happened? What happened? - drawled half-asleep Boris. "And what's the rush?"

- Fast, fast, fast! Boris, pack up. It is necessary to hand over the number to the attendants and - down!

Just in case, they called Sergey.

Forty minutes later, the bus in full, without a single exception, was waiting indignantly for Shalva, who hesitated to check in the room upstairs and finally, thirteen minutes late, but nevertheless, with a leisurely step, left the Pelican with a large duffel bag over shoulder.

Zaza frowned, grumbled with displeasure, but spat and decided not to get involved in front of the road, and only without an address reminded that seven of them were not waiting for one.

For some reason, only Denis felt awkward, and later he even apologized to Zaza for what happened at night and in the morning. The apology, however, softened Zaza's ardor, peace was achieved and the mood was raised.

The bus finally started, picked up a little speed, began to quickly move away from the already whitening "Pelican" - a, in which wonderful three days and four nights passed, and already far from the cozy and sweet Szolnok.

The bus taxied onto the motorway, headed for the next city - Kecskemét.

XII

The tour bus raced at high speed along the highway of mezhrazdolny, touched by snow fields.

Outwardly, it may not have differed much from other buses plying along the highway, but inside it events of an exceptionally individual character, different from others, took place, as, apparently, in various material bodies similar only outwardly in nature.

Along the way, buildings and structures of various types of energy activity flashed by, rows of solar panels, mostly installed on roofs, windmills.

- What practical people are the Hungarians, - Liya was surprised, turning to her husband, - how scrupulously they use the energy, so generously bestowed upon them by nature.

"Is it difficult to arrange such a network of energy-active buildings here," Kako said to her with regret.

“Our country is dominated by sunny and windy weather,” Alice explained to the group, “so it’s a sin not to use what we are gifted with.

- And you know, at one time I was engaged in them, - Kako remembered.

- Yes! And imagine, we even developed a small scientific topic with the guys on this issue.

- And what?

- And things are still there, as regards financing and new, most interesting, projects. But as soon as it comes to the practical use of proposals, obstacles and insurmountable obstacles immediately stand in the way.

- We have the same thing in SKB, - Leah shook her head.

- Imagine that energy savings reach, even in winter, in some energy-active buildings, almost up to sixty percent. And over time, installations begin to pay for themselves not only themselves, but also the structures on which they are installed.

Well, at least we could try. It was possible to conduct an experiment, but no more, - Kako was upset.

.....

- Don't get so carried away by these antics! Alice tried to console her colleague. The ancient sages said that how you start the day is how you spend it. Our days are like grain in a mill. Whatever you pour into the gutter, this will be, and therefore, such flour will give out.

- Just a shame, Alice! I treat them with all my heart, and what do I get in return? Here, please, look at what they are doing, - he showed with a glance at the four, captured by the construction of a house of cards on a flat surface of a diplomat. The house was folded, then one card was taken out of the foundation, put on and so on until the house fell apart. Most of all, Zazu was annoyed

lingering cries of Shalva, - avoye! - in critical situations.

- An interesting and instructive game, - grinned Alice.

- Yah?! Zaza was surprised.

- Well, of course, - Alice explained, - we are often annoyed not by the things and processes themselves, but by the attitude towards them. Look at this game from a different point of view. Don't each of us do the same in our daily lives. Not in the game, but in reality.

-What? Zaza asked.

- He builds card earthly houses, that is, he is engaged in a business that at one fine moment, the day collapses and collapses.

- You, Alice, shrewd, - thought Zaza. Where and from whom did you learn all this?

- How, isn't insight one of our traits, and we, people, constantly teach each other something, and the only question is whether we want it or not.

Yes, but not everything is acceptable, is it?

- And here it is already necessary to act on the principle of a bucket of a river excavator, which raises soil with water and mud from the bottom. The ladle, hovering over the river, releases everything insignificant, unnecessary and unimportant through its tightly closed jaw, and leaves the main, necessary mass in itself and transports it to the right place.

- Well, then a ladle, a machine, and a person is a much more sensitive creature.

- Look at everything easier, it is possible that your reaction turns them on even more.

- Eh, Dan, what are you doing, Boris cried after the careless move of his friend, - I am your grandmother Rosa ...

Denis really damaged the stability of the house of cards before Boris's move.

- She was not mine, but my son-in-law, he clarified.

"It doesn't matter," Boris snapped.

- Go, come on and don't swear, - Shalva called him to order.

- I'm not swearing, but you generally shut up and don't stick your head out! It all started with your careless move.

- Go, to whom I say! - Seeing that Boris was delaying the move, Shalva got angry in earnest.

Boris continued to smile on the eve of his fateful and most important move in the game.

- Our whole life is a game, and we are players in it, - Alice also grinned, carefully watching the game.

"Well, go ahead, before I take out my fist," Boris pressed, not without hesitation decided. Almost to the end, he pulled out one of the cards at the base with his long fingers, but the other one, tagging along behind it at the exit, decided the tragic fate of the collapsed structure.

Boris was indignant for a long time, protested about the dishonesty of his friends in the game, and in the meantime, another, new party lined up on the diplomat.

- How they quarrel with each other! Alice wondered. - As if not all Georgians. Not all?

- It is necessary, and noticed it, - Zaza was surprised at her insight. - Denis is an Armenian, Boris is a Ukrainian, Shalva is a Jew, and Sergey is Georgian. Here we have a country of different nationalities and friendly.

“That's good,” Alice remarked, “we don't have such an abundance of nationalities, we are Hungarians, Magyars, who make up almost ninety-eight percent of the population.

“Yes, but,” Zaza drawled, “in the end, we are all descendants of Adam and Eve.

- In the end, of course, - Alice agreed, - but the Almighty, because of the pride and disobedience of people, destroyed the Tower of Babel that he built and separated people to different countries, even though their roots are the same.

Soon, at the urgent request of most of the female contingent of the group, Alice gave a small lesson in everyday Hungarian. Some wrote down individual words and phrases.

- Kerem - this is please, kesenem - thank you, igen - I understand, nitva - open, zarva - closed, phobos and chocolo - hello and hello, teshek - I'm listening ...

- No, it's not for me, - Shalva uttered, - Armenian is much easier, - he stabbed Denis in a friendly way.

- Ha-ha, - he chuckled, - here's the news! Certainly!

At the end of the lesson, Alice asked the driver Sandor to turn on the Hungarian national folk and pop music around the cabin, which the passengers really liked, and did not notice that they were soon at the approaches to Kecskemét.

- Here, my dears, is the administrative center of the Bash-Kishsun county, in the interfluvium of our two largest rivers, the Danube and the Tisza, with a population of one hundred thousand people. It is the center of the vineyard region.

- Yes, the vine here stretches in dense rows, - Dato noted.

“We'll have to taste the wine from them,” Gia picked up.

“We'll try it, we'll try it, we'll have time,” his friend assured him.

- This previously small town was built up with one-story rural-type houses scattered over tens of square meters. But recently it has grown into a large and well-organized city with a diverse industry and, above all,

engineering and canning. From apricots, grapes and other fruits, it produces delicious compotes and juices, as well as Hungarian fruit vodka - "barackpalinka".

- Wow! part of the group perked up and buzzed.

"I shouldn't have mentioned the latter, Alice," Zaza remarked.

“Let's try it and say what it's worth,” Dato and Gia shouted.

The bus pulled up to one of the parking lots of a small bus station.

- So! We stop here for only an hour and again on the road, - Zaza announced in a commanding tone. - It's clear?

- OK OK! And understandable! The whole group yelled with one voice.

An hour later, the bus headed for the next point of the tourist route - the city of Szekesfehervar.

XIII

It was warm and cozy under the wool blanket. The bodies of those lying under it also warmed each other, exchanging energy fields.

In bed, he loved her more than she loved him, but outside, it was the other way around.

She looked after him as if she were her own, a small child, indulged his temper, whims and whims. Picked up food to taste, tidied up the house.

He answered her in return and gratitude for the care of the day, at night. Here he was the leader and ruler, and she was a submissive subject. He loved this woman, his first and last, as it seemed to him, affection, like no one ever, and was ready to sacrifice even his life for her.

She loved to sleep in the morning and often reproached him for the fact that he, though forcedly, but disturbed her sleep.

He was her first man, and in general did not know anything from her, except for playful reproaches.

But this morning she was the first to fidget, toss and turn, now and then turn from side to side, as if she were tormented by a heavy sleep and she tried in vain to brush it off.

Finally he woke up, rubbed his eyes, peered into her beautiful face, reached out to him and gently kissed her.

“Oh, Maxim,” she thought, still half asleep, “if everyone knew how to love so sensitively and carefully ... Strange,” she accepted the warmth of his body, soft, light movements, “I seem to be sleeping, but the thought has awakened. However, scientists say that the brain, like the heart, continues to work during sleep. According to their calculations, he can remain free, not working, for only a maximum of three seconds, after which he is filled with all sorts of thoughts, some of which we accept, others we discard, like unwanted men, she smiled awake. - Our freedom, apparently, is manifested in what we accept and what we do not. Feuerbach believes that a person is what he eats, and this, apparently, extends to the nourishment of the brain that we serve it. Everything comes from the head, all the joys, successes, sufferings ... Apparently, you will have to get up. Funny connection between the bladder and the brain. And it helps and ... hinders. In the meantime, he reached her lips, touched them.

- Fu-u, Maxim, okay, go away! She lightly pushed him away.

"For what?" he muttered in bewilderment.

She froze. A gray cat stared at her with a plaintive question. After hesitating and waiting, he, in obedience to her will, reluctantly, but, got up from the bed.

She threw back the covers for a while, lay in a warm nightgown, still with her eyes closed. Feeling a chill, she shuddered, opened her eyes, put her feet into warm slippers, threw on soft robe.

- Maxim, come to your place, - she asked in a pleading tone, - let me sleep a little more.

He quickly jumped to the floor and went to sleep on the sofa, not far from the beds.

She rolled over into the blanket and closed her eyes, but did not fall asleep, after waiting, she opened her eyes and looked at the large electronic wall clock.

"I'll take a nap for another half an hour," I remarked to myself with pleasure. But thoughts climbed and climbed into her head, did not let her fall asleep, and she realized the futility of her undertaking.

- Lord, help me to reject the vain and earthly...

But the prayer was not enough.

She softly hummed a melodic spiritual chant.

The invisible, inner barrier soon dissipated.

- Obsessive thoughts are the result of an unfaithful spiritual life. No one can avoid fighting them, but it is necessary to fight with confession and repentance.

She remembered the words of the founder of monastic life, St. Anthony the Great: human life is a ladder leading to spiritual perfection, and it is impossible to stand on it, but you must either go up or go down it. Blessed is the rising man.

Her soul became warmer, and it was already easier to switch to earthly affairs and thoughts. Minutes of a very recent past surfaced, which she happened to spend with a young man who was not very well known from distant sunny Georgia.

She suddenly felt as if with renewed force she was pulled down, a feeling of the first in her life and farewell kisses surfaced, when she stood exhausted for a long time and was surprised at his courage, and even impudence.

After all, her admirer Igor, who is somewhat, two years older, in age, did not lead to this even the last few years of courting her.

"Who dared, he ate it ?!" she thought involuntarily.

Again, again, thoughts run where they shouldn't.

She reluctantly got up and walked into the living room. The rays of the morning winter sun easily made their way through the gaps between the grayish clouds scattered and driven by a weak breeze, reaching the farthest corners. Julia happily went to meet them.

"An unfavorable wind again," she thought, "it keeps blowing and blowing. All right! They say that radioactive clouds have made more than one circle over the globe. And now, like a sarcophagus, they serve as a kind of interference with radiation, although they still let a few rays of the sun through themselves.

She went out onto the balcony, felt the coolness there, went up to the window, and only then noticed that she had frightened off a couple of gray doves, feasting on the windowsill with crumbs from yesterday's tasty gift to Yulia.

"Birds are an indicator of life," she thought, "they feel the radiation situation better than people, and apparently they would hardly have stayed in the city if it were impossible to stay in it.

She furtively glanced at the cold winter sun, sank and drenched in it, soaking up rain streams like the earth after a long heat.

"Every day should be lived as if it were your last. It's good to live with the thought of death... Or maybe it's better without it? How carefree and untroubled was the time before the disaster. In the heart of Europe, the explosion is much stronger than Hiroshima and Nagasaki! And it hurt not only us."

She moved away from the window, and soon she heard the light tapping of her beak on the outer window sill.

"They've arrived again! But today, for some reason, they don't coo. Apparently not before. I wonder if they are cold in winter?"

She admired the frost resistance of her indoor flowers, wintering on the window in the loggia, and suddenly she heard the gurgling of streams of hot water flowing into the radiator compartments. She walked over and touched the radiator above the parquet flooring by the wide loggia windows.

"So far, only," she stated, "it is only being filled. If only they shone like the sun!"

Gradually, she overcame the desire to sleep a little more. Before, she had to snatch minutes from her morning sleep in order to spend them in the loggia, alone with awakening nature and her thoughts. Many poetic lines spilled into her mind at that time.

"They say that real art is dancing on the edge of the abyss. In anxious expectation of the end, not only swans sing, but also people, although for this they also need to

overcome fear in themselves. She was helped in this by ancient wisdom: do what you should do, and there be what will be.

Already, having smelled the smell of food in the distance, they flew up to the window and, having fluffed up, chirped the sparrows that were frozen. Not without difficulty, and thanks only to his agility, he managed to briefly win back a place on the windowsill from the pigeons and his part of the morning meal.

Chased by voracious pigeons, they flew off and flew up again to the windowsill, and the crumbs of their meal scattered over it.

Julia stood at the window, listening to the growing rumble of the awakening life of her hometown.

"It's time," she suddenly ordered herself, determining the time by the sun's upward movement to a certain mark, obediently left the loggia, tightly closed the door behind her, carefully opened another, peered at the old woman, leaning in an armchair over the frisky knitting needles. She looked up at the newcomer over the old, large, optical glasses, Shh, - she put her finger to her lips, pointing in the direction of Yulia's sleeping mother. Julia entered on tiptoe, kissed her grandmother, straightened and carefully peered into the fruits of her efforts, responded to the offer to try on an almost finished new thing, almost squealed with joy and pleasure, catching her reflection in a fashionable crimson-red cap. she ran straight with her knitting needles and a ball into the hall with a high mirror, froze in front of him.

- Well, go get dressed, - grandmother took back the knitting, - and I'm still a little busy.

"But I want to see and learn," Yulia hesitated.

- Yes, what is there to study! The main thing in any business is desire, diligence and love!

- Love, love, love in everything! You can't go anywhere without her. The magic key that opens all the doors on the life path of people.

- Oh, - my grandmother drawled, - this is the only thing worth living for and a person lives in the world. Around the axis of love revolves the globe, the galaxy, the life of a person, his relationship with the outside world. And she, like the sun, warms every heart.

"Every heart..." - she lowered her gaze, trying to hide the oncoming tears. For the first time I felt their weakness, understood the essence and essence of words, sweet tears. Passionate and eager

I suddenly became convinced that I wanted to prolong these minutes for life and even eternity.

- Ah, are you cooing again? - the voice of the awakened mother invaded her spiritual impulse.

- Yes, here, I decided to surprise her, but I didn't have time to finish ...

The conversation gained momentum, penetrated deeper and deeper into her ear, driving away her former blissful state. Trying to protect and prolong it, she could not restrain her sobs and rushed headlong into her room, buried her face in the pillow, lifted her head with an effort of will, looked at the icon of the savior.

- Forgive me, Lord, take away sin from me, but ... I fell in love with him ... - The inner voice interrupted the prayer: "But what about your Igor?" He's been making you rich... for several years now...

- I love, I love of course, and him ... but in a different way.

- What happened to you? - she creaked the door and went up to her, already a little calmer and stroking the cat, mother.

- Nothing... You still won't understand...

- But still?

- Then... Okay?

Mother, for some time, silently, thoughtfully peered at her daughter:

Don't pay attention to what your grandmother tells you. You never know ... she is under eighty.

She doesn't say anything like that. And it's not about her at all.

- And in whom?

- Inside me.

- Do you need help?

- Mom, later, someday, on occasion and mood.

- All right, - the mother touched her hair, - just don't hurt me.

- Yes mom ...

After washing the dishes after breakfast, she left her grandmother and mother at the TV and went to her room. I fiddled with the cat, listened to light classical music, involuntarily delved into memories. All of them led near or directly to Sergei. She approached the wall calendar, noted one more day lived, several times counted the number of days left before his return to Kyiv from Hungary.

She did not want to think about what would happen after his departure to Tbilisi, and only waited for their next meeting here.

Trying to fall asleep, I leafed through a book with my favorite poems, sketched something of my own ...

XIV

The beauty of the freely spreading fields of the Central Danube Plain attracted the eyes of those passing by in a comfortable bus to the heart of the Hungarian territory.

- Yes, - Dito broke out, - it would be nice to come here in the summer, when everything is blooming and fragrant.

“But this, apparently, will have to be done without me,” his sister Nino suggested.

- Well, why not? Wait and see. Agree that students still need to be given some kind of general idea, even in a minimal dose, otherwise they will not become useful and happy members of society, - Dito switched to another topic. - A profession cut off from the surrounding real world and time is unproductive.

“But, on the other hand, we must not forget that if you want to be happy and virtuous, you should not generalize everything,” his sister reminded him, “in some cases you have to stick to narrow particulars. General ideas sometimes turn into inevitable intellectual evil. Not philosophers, but ordinary people form the basis of society. Here is an example of our group. Look around, think who needs your philosophy.

- Ay-y, - Shalva drawled in an undertone, - brother and sister are philosophizing again. In defiance of the philosopher neighbors, he began to loudly tell various amusing stories and anecdotes.

- Moral education should be based, first of all, on understanding and love for wisdom, thinking, and they should be instilled in a person from an early age. Parents, as a rule, barely complete their task and readily pass the baton to us. At the same time, their influence on their children begins to weaken, and ours gradually increase. After us, university professors, a steep

soaring upwards, into the sky of life, to become navigators ourselves, choose a path and follow it.

- The reasoning, desiring, deciding brain usually consists of what we put into it and give an incentive to put into it by others. All people belong not only to themselves, but to everyone.

“The question of the level of search activity or, as I sometimes like to call it, spiritual comfort, persistently pops up here,” Dito continued his judgments. - Search activity, successfully manifested in one area of activity, begins to spread to others. Genuinely creative personalities usually manifest themselves in a variety of ways.

- But one should not, apparently, forget Rotenberg's advice: do not impose anything on anyone, leaving no choice, otherwise respect for both the one who imposes and the one who is imposed may decrease.

- Oh, - drawled Dmitry, well done! This must be done with extreme caution. But still, I think it is more correct to go from the general to the particular along the path of formation, formation and development of the individual. Without solving the general, you cannot solve the particular. Yes, and the great leader of the world proletariat himself warns against addressing private issues without understanding the general ones, so as not to fill his forehead every time.

- How interesting! But what about the dogma of development from the individual to the general, from the less complex to the more complex? Nino objected. – Isn't it a counter, opposite direction movement?

- And these are different things. Therefore, the movement is the opposite.

Nino narrowed her eyes in disagreement.

- Yes, yes, - Dito confirmed, - one does not contradict the other, because these are completely different things, even if they are in some way interconnected. It's like driving on a motorway, at the same time both common and different, oncoming, opposite. But only one thing is invariable and unshakable, as M.K. Mamardashvili: in order to stay alive, continuous efforts are required, otherwise the personality is not formed.

- This, of course, is indisputable, - Nino agreed with him, - but not everyone can do it.

- Why, because the creator gives everyone equal chances.

- But different abilities and talents.

- But, that's why we exist, to complement each other.

- Oh, Dito, it will, I have a headache, - Nino asked, - I went to relax and rest, and not to listen to your tiresome lectures.

- Wait, wait! I would also like to recall L.N. Tolstoy, to whom education seemed difficult and difficult only as long as, without educating oneself, one tries to educate others, whether one's own children, pupils, students, whoever ... Realizing that one can educate others only through oneself, educating oneself, you are convinced that the question of education is abolished and the main question of life remains: how to live oneself.

- Oh, this, perhaps, is indeed the most important and important question that everyone decides for himself in his own way, - Nino agreed.

- Did you decide it yourself?

“For the moment, yes,” Nino confirmed, “I’m leaving you for a while at the back of the bus,” she went to one of the rear free seats, where the backbone of the group, the women, Rusiko, Manana, Ketino and Sofiko were based.

“Women can love philosophy, but not philosophers,” Dito sighed after her.

- Zaza, I propose to play candy wrappers, - Shalva suggested loudly.

The guide pretended not to hear.

- What are wrappers? Alice inquired.

- BUT? It seems like such a game, - Zaza answered her, - something from small things is thrown into a certain receiver - candy wrappers, each of the players, and then the owners are offered to perform be the action that fell to the lot of their little thing.

- Curious! Shall we try?

- So, - Dmitry stated, - Thomas Edison was right: a person is ready to do anything to avoid mental efforts, for which he subsequently gets what he deserves.

Everyone, with a few exceptions, quickly found wrappers for themselves and handed them to Zaza, who, in turn, adding his wrapper, handed them to Alice.

Alice shuffled the wrappers in her lady's hat, covered it with her scarf, and soon the first performers emerged.

The repertoire and genre were chosen differently - poems, songs, dances, shouts, jumps ...

Shalva fell out to shout out that he is a donkey and therefore roars continuously.

“Give me back my electric saw for lumberjacks,” Dato demanded, obeying his phantom.

Shandor, the bus driver, had to honk continuously for five minutes on the go, for which he was fined by the traffic police car that overtook the bus.

Not having time to pull out another wrapper, Shalva inadvertently shouted:

- Let the next phantom kiss Alice.

Alice was embarrassed, blushed slightly, hesitated with the phantom. Finally, she pulled out, carefully unclenched her fist.

Zaza was dumbfounded when he recognized his candy wrapper.

- Oh, and someone was lucky, - a voice from the salon was heard.

- Well, okay guys, we finish the game, round off! – in turn was embarrassed Zaza.

- That is, as? they all protested at once. - No, since we started, we'll finish the game.

- I said enough! Zaza repeated sternly.

- Are you scared? – looking down, asked Alice.

- What? Whom? - Zaza's tongue stuttered.

Yes me. Don't be afraid, I won't eat you. It's just a game after all.

Zaza, Zaza, Zaza! - chanted in the cabin.

Zaza hesitated, but made up his mind and lightly touched Alice's lips.

"I didn't know that Georgians don't know how to kiss," she smiled.

Zaza blushed, backed away to a free chair, where Nino had been sitting next to Dmitry:

- You're a guy, Dito, that didn't agree to play this, so to speak, game!

"They say that a smart man always finds a way out of a dead end, and a wise man will never get into it," Dito did not object to him.

In the next game, "cold, warm, hot", Zaza did not take part.

- And yet the road is tiring, isn't it, Rusiko? Manana shared her feelings.

- Of course, - agreed with her friend, - but the energy, vigor, enthusiasm of the young charge and return to the recent past, from which we came to the present day.

- How quickly and how slowly time flows!

- Yeah...

- And nothing tangible, except for memories, remains.

- No, why not...

- Oh, leave it, for God's sake, Rusa! Who puts us in what, - Manana complained, - for the sake of them and their children, we went to such a distance, and in such a way that we lost in Hungary. I have not been able to visit my village for several years now.

- We are for them, and they are for us, such is life, "It is life," as the British say, and there's nothing to be done. The joy of communicating with children is also a considerable gift from the Almighty.

- Yes, yes, but still, we were completely different in relation to our parents.

- A well-known problem of parents-children ...

- And yet stubborn human blindness - meanwhile Dito continued to inspire his guide, talking about the levels of human souls. A deep intellectual swoon haunts each of us. Spinning thoughts without an answer - this is the work of life. The new luminary of philosophy, Mamardashvili, assessed people according to the levels of their souls and, as singers are given a voice, he gave people thinking. A person's experiences are judged by the degree of blindness. Antonio Gamay correctly observed that the pessimism of the intellect is the optimism of the will. And Marcel Proust says that life is an effort in time. Merab Mamardashvili was a man of love, he gave more than he received, and he always sent friends to friends, introduced them.

The philosopher exists not in order to create, but in order to preserve the ability to think in a person. Consciously, not unconsciously, but we choose, analyze almost everything - life, so in the present

we forge our future.

The bus, picking up speed, flew along a smooth and soft highway, carrying a group of tourists deep into the country, people of different intellect, views, gender ... There were different things in one and the same thing in different ones, but they were all children of their time, their homeland and their planet, but each fell out and had to go his own way of life, and their current unity, like unity in general, was conditional, temporarily relative. A moment flashed when everyone at once experienced a similar, akin to all feeling

1. It life is life.

fatigue, detachment, but then everyone was drawn to their own, some to rest, some to sleep, some to solitude in oneself.

Only the driver Sandor and the Hungarian guide Elis, who were calmly talking in Hungarian, were not eligible for suspension. On the way to Szekesfehervar we made several stops.

The longest was the rest on the outskirts of Budapest. Zaza allowed the group to warm up, walk the streets of the suburbs, eat, do some light shopping, mostly souvenirs.

Zaza, embarrassed by the recent incident, shunned Alice and joined Kako and Leah.

Alice initially stayed on the bus with Shandor, but then agreed to accompany RUsiko and Manane.

The group returned to the bus just before departure, with a charge of vivacity and in high spirits.

It turned out that in all the outlets of the city, change, for lack of change, was given out in boxes of matches and condoms, individually packed in colorful packages.

- Don't you have them for sale?

- On sale, yes, but in pharmacies, and almost hidden. But, in stores instead of surrender? Not! After all, this provokes, especially young people, to intemperance, indiscretion, - Zaza answered her passionately.

- Well, why not? Alice wondered. Is love immodest?

- Not love, but sex? Zaza blushed.

- Isn't sex an integral part of love?

- And then it's a solid yellow press everywhere, - Zaza continued to object.
- But you get used to it. That's how you react at the beginning.
- Isn't that a tragedy?

- Who looks at things like that! We believe that the protection of young people is a much more effective means than the propaganda of abstinence. It usually has the opposite effect. What cannot be avoided is best endured with minimal loss.

We drove into the city in the evening, with the onset of dusk. Shandor switched on the headlights and the slightly glowing instruments on the driver's panel. Light melodic Hungarian music floated through the cabin.

"And so, my dears," Alice announced in her sonorous voice, "here we enter Szekesfehershwar,

the administrative center of Fejer County, which is home to more than one hundred thousand inhabitants. They are developing engineering, aluminum and leather goods industries here.

Szekesfehershvar is one of the fastest growing cities in Hungary, it is located close to both the capital and the industrial complex of the middle mountains. This neighborhood prompted the release of buses. There is a branch of the Budapest plant "Ikarus", which also specializes in televisions and electronic computers.

In the XII-XIII centuries. Szekesfehershvár, Latin for Alba Regia, was the capital of Hungary. Most of the Hungarian kings of the times before the Turkish invasion are buried in its central cathedral, after which only ruins have survived from ancient Alba Regia - the open-air museum "Park of Ruins".

- "Almost like our Mtskheta," the irrepressible Shalva wedged into Alice's message.
- Constantly conducted excavations, giving interesting results.

During the years of popular power, the city went far beyond the old borders and was decorated with beautiful buildings of modern architectural style.

- People's power is the most humane and fair, - exclaimed Shalva.

"We will spend three nights and two days in this city," continued Alice. – We will visit the ruins of a Romanesque church of the 11th century. We will examine the Gothic chapel of the 15th century. We will visit the baroque Carmelite church of the middle of the 18th century. Let's enjoy the delights of F.A. Maulberch. Maybe we will have time to see the bishop's palace and the houses of the regional council of the early 19th century. in the style of classicism. In a word, a lot of very interesting things await us, an indelible impression for many years to come.

- In short, Sklifasovsky, - Shalva could not resist a remark in an undertone.
- Let's wait and see, - Boris supported him.

There was a wave of excitement in the cabin as the bus pulled up to one of the finest hotels in the town.

Soon the weary travelers straightened out the formalities, Alice negotiated with the administration, and then with Zaza. We agreed that she would arrive in the morning to start sightseeing trips.

- Thank you, Alice, - thanked Zaza.

At parting, they exchanged embarrassed kisses on the cheek.

The evening in the rooms passed relatively calmly. Fatigue from a long lulling road has affected.

The evening of the next day was much livelier and more productive. The members of the group had an additional opportunity to communicate and share their impressions about the day spent and visiting some of the sights that Alice previously announced on the bus yesterday.

After sightseeing, they exchanged impressions, turned into preference.

Sergei, as in most cases, was only a free observer and, taking advantage of the fact that the game was mostly friendly, made light jokes, for which he received a corresponding scolding from the players.

Zaza, having regained strength lost during the trip and the tiring day, watched a football match in the hotel lobby.

Vano and Kote dared to go down to the cafe-bar, where soon their peers Ketino and Sofiko appeared and sat down at a table next to them, now and then looking sideways in their direction.

"We still need to approach them, Kote, and invite them," Vano suggested in a slightly uncertain tone. - Inconvenient ... After all, members of the same group. You need to get to know them better.

But do they want it? Kote objected. "And aren't they waiting for someone here?"

- But whom, Kote, Hungarians, or what? Firstly, they do not know Hungarian, and then ... in this wilderness?

Well, knowledge of the language is not absolutely necessary if the meeting is desired. In addition, these may not be Hungarians, but ... let's say, the British.

- You make me laugh. But okay, let it be your way, we will stay away, - Vano agreed, - but I think it's impolite not to respond to the desire of the ladies to get to know each other better.

The guys slowly sipped champagne, dipped go to the melody, covering the semi-dark under the bar, with weak lights of light music. A small glowing ball in the center of the ceiling lined with colored glass added to the mystery.

- Pay attention, she looks at you, - Vano noticed.
- Who?
- Ketino, or something, her name is.
- So what?
- Like what? – not weathered Vano. "Stay here alone, and I'll sit down with them."
- Well as you know!

Vano got up, slowed down at the neighbor's table, greeted the girls, exchanged a few words, which immediately turned into a light conversation. Apparently, he led her in the right direction, as he caused first smiles, and then laughter, followed by destruction, you can say an invitation to sit down, prompting him to sign to a friend who reluctantly, unhurriedly got up from his seat and stepped with a bottle champagne to the table just won by the brave predecessor.

- Well, well done! - Vano threw to meet him, - girls don't bite their own. Really, girls?

Ketino and Sofiko smiled and blushed a little.

- This is Ketino or Ket, and this is Sofiko or Sofa, - Vano introduced his friend to the girls.

- Yes, I already know.

- It's more fun together, otherwise we somehow kept apart.

The girls smiled and washed down coffee with champagne from tall, thin glasses.

- People began to be afraid of each other, - Kote shook his head, - preferring restrictions and abstinence to risky acquaintances.

- Yes, it's time, - Sofiko agreed with him.

- And then many communicate only with their own, and how to see through and understand them? – supported girlfriend Ketino.

In the girls and in themselves, in addition to the desire to get close and communicate, some complexes and alertness were visible.

- And so, for the deepening of our acquaintance, - Vano announced soon, and everyone clinked glasses and drank several sips of the life-giving drink.

Vano ordered a couple more bottles of champagne, some cakes, chocolate and coffee.

"Life is sometimes ruled by chance," Vano continued his toast, "in the end, we were created to enrich spiritually, to know each other. Kote and I are doctors, and you, excuse me, what is your profession?"

Ketino and Sofiko looked at each other.

- I am an economist, I work in a bank, - Sofiko smiled, - and Ketino is a nuclear physicist.

- Oh, - Vano drawled, - Mamma Mia! Here you and I got into trouble, Kote, - he joked.

- And what attracted the girl to physics?

- And how did you find each other?

- And we are former classmates, since childhood we have been walking together through life ...

- This is wonderful! – admired Vano. - And yet everyone wanders through the forest of his life alone ...

“And at the same time, according to the well-known psychologist Rubinstein, the first of the first conditions is another person and a person’s heart is woven from his relationship to others,” Kote timidly joined in the conversation.

- Wow, well done, my friend, - Vano praised him, - nevertheless, I consider M. Bakhtin's formula the best of the existing definitions of a person: a person is not equal to himself.

- Circumstances sometimes enslave to the point that sometimes it is impossible to make out where the mind speaks and where the heart enters, - Sofiko whispered.

“Most people are as happy as they decide to be,” Ketino supported her friend.

- If you want to be happy, be it, - Kote quoted Kozma Prutkov.

- Shakespeare was right, nothing is good or bad, it all depends on how we look at things, what our mindsets and attitudes are, - Sofiko said confidently.

- And yet, guys, I think everyone looks at the other to the best of his ... his own, - Vano thought, - well, well, let's put it this way: to the best of his education and decency.

- I generally believe that a person can be recognized already from the first couple, - exclaimed Kote.

- And before that, by the look, - Sofiko answered him in tone, and Ketino looked at Kote and immediately averted her eyes.

- That is, in the eyes ...

The conversation developed and gained interest. Soon the first invitations to slow dances were heard.

Little by little, couples were revealed by the similarity of characters. Kote was stomping around with Ketino, and Vano was circling with Sofiko.

- What a coincidence! Keto and Kote! - joked with his partner Vano.

- I'll tell you a little secret, Vano, - Sofiko smiled, - we owe our rapprochement to Ketino's sympathy for Kote. And I encourage her. As they say, what you won't do for a friend!

"In that case, you should all be thanking me!?" – self-satisfied declared Vano. - From you all magarych!

.....

"Strange desires, cravings for strange deeds have always haunted and haunt me," Dato explained to Mzia and Georgy at a restaurant table at the far end of the hotel lobby.

"For God's sake, don't scare me," Mziya asked, smiling.

- Do not worry, - Gia reassured her, - with friends, he shows himself sincerely devoted and faithful.

- I remember that even at school, don Juan crept into our class, who tried to challenge my success among girls, which made me nervous.

- Well ...

It ended badly for both of them!

- How?

- I had to have a direct and frank conversation with him around the corner of the stadium, in a small secluded place between the transformer kiosk, the outer wall of the attached three-story wing of the school.

Surrounded by class group and our argument did not last long. I struck him down with a direct question: does he want to be hit on the neck or not, to which he answered with similar counter-men.

And when he openly admitted that I want to get from him in the neck, he thought, not daring to take the first step. Then I repeated my question, to which he agreed, apparently hoping that I would not dare to move on him. But he was wrong.

- So, what is next? Mzia asked impatiently.

Dato took a deep breath.

- He beat him up. True, I got a lot of change, - Georgy continued instead of him, - well, and then one high school student took them both to the police.

- So romantic! - Mziya noted with sadness.

She delicately took piece by piece from the plate and patiently listened to stories about the exploits of her friends.

- Any activity is much more difficult than passivity, - said Dato, - and only the dead do not want to live and be the first.

- The desire for superiority is inherent in us, men, from birth, - Gia supported him,
- and we follow this impulse of ours.

- We, women, too, - Mzia was not slow to note, - I like your energy, but it should not overwhelm your mind. You need to learn the right orientation and correctly determine the goals and meaning of life. Otherwise, you can fall into a dead end or a trap.

- Friendship overcomes all obstacles, - Dato argued.

- You also need to be able to choose friends, and even more importantly, learn to control yourself.

- The four of us have been friends since school, Mzia! Like musketeers: one for all and all for one! Gia explained. - Always and in everything.

- Yes, you can't forbid living beautifully! Sometimes I'm even scared with you, "Mzia admitted.

- Will you join our ranks?

"Perhaps," Mzia replied with some hesitation, wiping the edges of her lips with a snow-white starched napkin and raising a glass of red wine.

- Only by acting as he does not know, a person acts as he thinks, - said Dato.

- Who said that? Mzia was horrified.

- It's a Brazilian proverb! Gia explained.

"The feat of one is nothing but the result of the bungling and weakness of the other," Dato insisted.

"Besides, persistence is often more important than victory," Gia supported him.

"That which cannot be comprehended by the mind, cannot be achieved by force. Remember these words, - passionately insisted Mzia, more and more acutely realizing her need for young friends in order to keep them from absolutely unpredictable actions from which the whole group and the trip as a whole could suffer. She felt that there was no control over the thugs, that they had their own philosophy, their own views on life and their own morals, if I may say so.

That the only person in the group they could listen to was her and no one else. Whether her eyes, voice, appearance, could serve as a brake, despite the complete discrepancy between their life positions. They must have felt an inexplicable sympathy for her, and she was occupied and tormented by the mysteriousness of the antinomy arising in her,

which she explained to herself by the imperious unity and struggle of opposites.

- If you want, Dato, I will explain to you how an impulse and a desire to cross the line are born in a person ...

- Well, interesting! Dato pricked up his ears.

- No offence. Is it coming?

- It's coming!

- It is common for a person, even an adult, "to himself", to mentally play actions that are unacceptable in society, says psychologist Petrovsky. When an action is thought, a motor impulse is born. An adult, well-mannered and self-controlled person, if he is not drunk, suppresses such a motor impulse. Children and young people cannot resist this thought and action, and for this reason they sometimes act as "not" to do. That is why prohibitions dictated by upbringing most often cause a backlash.

But that doesn't apply to us. We stand guard over the rights of people of all ages. No one's freedom or dignity should be infringed upon. Brains should be set not only for the younger ones, but also for the older ones. And do not be ashamed to listen to each other.

- Oh, - Mzia drawled, - you are incorrigible. Come on, Gia better, let's dance to this wonderful melody, and Dato, stay and think about what I just said.

Her thoughts and feelings that evening merged with the rhythm and tact of the dancing body, and she did not dance with her young cavaliers a single slow dance.

" Okay! A few more days ... "And there she will return to the company of a friend who is waiting for her in her homeland, many years older in age. But now it was pleasant for her to feel, if not an old woman, then a very respectable person among young children.

The second and last day of sightseeing in Szekesfehervar turned out to be more interesting and fruitful than the previous one.

- Oh! Zaza drew Alice's attention to Kote with Ketino and Vano with Sofiko. It looks like the couple found each other!

- It looks like, - Alice agreed, - having looked closely, and returned to her information about historical and architectural and building monuments

Almost the entire group, to Zaza's surprise, bombarded Alice with questions with interest, drew parallels with the key historical events of the country, convinced that, for

with a small exception, peoples do not differ much from each other.

On this day, the group for the first time in full force with took a break in a Hungarian national restaurant. There she was introduced to some technologies of winemaking and wine storage. They offered to taste several varieties of white and red wine from different barrels in a cool cellar.

At a hearty late dinner, the Hungarians, the owners of the restaurant, generously laid out to the guests all the most precious things that they had in their hearts, minds and kitchens that day.

Delicious, fragrant Hungarian dishes, accompanied by a small national orchestra, were followed by invitations for tourists to dance in pairs with the dancers of the ensemble. Zaza and Alice started dancing, Dato, Giya and Mziya flashed their skills. By the end, Shalva could not resist.

- Eh, where ours did not disappear! - he exclaimed and moved to the stage, Denis tried to hold him, but to no avail.

Shalva invited Alice, and their dance, although somewhat strange and extravagant, was, in principle, very successful.

Boris and Denis barely had time to click, capturing interesting and funny moments with their still unsold Zenith cameras.

The day was extremely successful for the members of the group and turned out to be the most memorable and fun of the past in Hungary. Until the end, his group even managed to see the historical monument of architecture provided for by the program. The tour, however, was clearly inferior to the previous one, and especially the general pastime in the restaurant.

Hungarian wine played in their veins and drew to rest, but they got to the hotel only in the evening. Evening shower with amazing skill removed all daytime fatigue.

Numerous jets of warm water shot at the young girl's face, prompting her to open her eyelids in order to penetrate and touch her eyes. The black, water-heavy hair that was scattered over the snow-white neck for a while lost its luster and volume, jets from them flowed onto the stomach, chest, legs, back, and the whole camp oscillated and spun under the warm stream and exuded the aroma of fluffy soapy foam. The shower was interrupted, the body was covered with a large fluffy towel, and a light and fragrant fairy fluttered out of the bathroom, exuding freshness and youth. Orange, the color of a bright robe,

she dried her hair with a terry towel and continued to dry it with a small buzzing hair dryer. Not feeling the weight and gravity, she, like a butterfly, slid under the covers and, because of the picked up magazine, she felt the gaze of her friend on her.

- You are so Beautiful! both exclaimed almost simultaneously to each other.

Unexpectedly for Ketino, Sofiko's girlfriend suddenly leaned towards her with a kiss.

- What are you doing? She was surprised, but didn't resist.

- I love you, Kate!
 - And I love you ... but that doesn't mean anything, does it?
 - Of course, nothing.
- Maybe, but I don't want it anymore.

"Calm down, fool, what's wrong with that?" Okay... that's it! Just in case, I took strong protective ...

- What are you talking about?
- Don't be a fool, Kate! Well, just in case... if he... you understand?
- Are you out of your mind? Do you think I'll let him?
- But why then build eyes?
- Well, you never know! I just like him, he seems modest and decent, and I'm sure

that he won't allow himself anything.

- Sure! Sure! You can't be sure of anything! From men at any moment you can expect anything.

- Are you going to say goodbye to innocence on a trip?
- Never mind, Kate, I was just joking.
- So do not joke!

Hiding from friends, Sergei again plunged into memories of Kyiv. He called Yulia in his soul Lyulechka, recalled their meetings, walks along the Dnieper embankment, along Khreshchatyk, Matveevsky Bay, Rusanovsky Strait, the park on the Venetian Strait, where they rode in a boat, when he first dared to hug her, the first and farewell kiss. He found a paper in his bag and, having made up his mind, set to work on the second letter. "I will write as if I received an answer to the first."

"I received your answer, for which I am very grateful and grateful to you. I was very worried while waiting. Feelings come in waves, and it's very hard to shut them off. Maybe,

this prompts me to some rationalism, and if I underestimate or miss something, then this happens involuntarily, and I ask you to excuse me. I think about you all the time and recreate you in my imagination, although I am far from being an artist. I thank you for your sensitivity, attentiveness, kindness. I know how hard it is for you to be distracted in such a difficult time, and even when you are busy at work and at home. I'm glad you took on your dissertation. I realize how much time, work, skill, patience, endurance you need, but everything starts small and insignificant.

Remember the famous song that the era of light years is approaching, the call of the pioneer - always be ready! So these lines could be changed: the era of the dark years is approaching, the cry of a citizen ...

Perhaps I should not say so at the moment when you take up your dissertation, but from the height of what has been achieved, everything seems exactly that way, and not otherwise.

In any case, I wish you great creative success. Thinking of your kind letter. Still, the good old way of communication - correspondence - has its advantages. The lines of letters are dictated to me by my heart, even though it pulls me to reflect on what worries us so much. In the end after all, you and I are people with an academic education and careful upbringing, and therefore it is not alien to us to put more than one direct meaning into words.

Triviality is absolutely unacceptable for me. This is my gut, my essence. The mutual interest of people is one of the few phenomena that today can surprise a person or people who, in most cases, are interested only in their lives and, at best, in their close environment. No one has ever given me such great interest and attention as you. For a long time, my dear friend, I wanted to write about this, but every time I pushed these lines aside, leaving a slight understatement. I was not sure whether I have the right to attach to my pain, because everyone has enough of their own. The most important thing, perhaps, is the panic fear of losing the opportunity to communicate with you. Not you, but I need you, and this is not a reservation. I try to grasp at the saving straw, perhaps clumsily. I had to be disappointed, many, probably, were disappointed in me, and each time it became more and more painful. It's become unbearable and I don't want to hurt you. I agree with the classic, it's better to be

a victim than an executioner. If with all this you do not break with me, at least for some time, any connection, I will be grateful. In general, I am a stranger to half-heartedness, and I give myself to every business without a trace, as they say to the fullest, for which sometimes I have to answer. How to evaluate the nature of the relationship, which is built for a very long time, stubbornly, painstakingly, with the creative work of the soul, into a pink-blue crystal castle and one day, God bless, of course, plunges into ruins, ashes or dust. What's the point of all this stuff then? Does it deserve any ratings, and if so, which ones?

Fortunately, I still have enough good and kind acquaintances and friends, but, you must admit, with your feelings you will not go to everyone. Paper, however, endures everything, poor thing, more, but still it is torn or burned.

I had to spend a lot of time on work and on my dissertation, and now I notice that, like the earth, it is starting to run away from under my feet.

- Fu-u! - Sergey drawled, discarding the written sheet, - how do writers write novels, if a small, sincere letter requires so much physical and emotional strength! Shouldn't we really start a "Letter to my feelings" ... after all, nothing on earth passes without a trace, - he thought, already standing on a small balcony of the hotel and peering into the cold starry sky. The question turned out to be addressed to the brightest star on it at that hour.

XV

In Esztergom, the group decided to leave early, deciding, on the advice of Zaza, not to waste too much time and fill up on the bus.

Shandor successfully caught quiet, melodic music on the radio, which slightly lulled the half-asleep tourists in the cabin.

"When I get home, I'll sit in a hot bath and sit there for a long, long time," Shalva quoted one of the heroes of the famous movie.

- Both I and I will sleep for a long, long time, - Boris muttered in response to him.

- Ara, I don't understand, - Shalva picked up, - that we have come to travel for a long time along the roads of Hungary, to sleep and play cards? Or walk?

- It was our headman Denis who stirred up everyone, otherwise they would be sitting quietly at home now, - complained Shalva.

- Hey, headman, - Boris looked around, - why did you take us here, what did we do to you?

- You will receive the answer to this question at the end of the trip, when we return home, - Denis turned from side to side, trying to sleep.

- No, Serge, here you are the most fair and honest among us. So answer us, do you like the behavior of the headman? We ask him vital questions, and he kicks back! Is it Soviet? Shalva pressed.

- Get away from us, - Sergey supported Denis, - touch the one who is behind you! Kote and Wano were snoring behind them. There was no reaction from them.

- Vano, please lend your chewing gum, be a friend, I'm going to Vake today, - Shalva was really worried, as if he accidentally swallowed the gum.

Wano actually spat out the chewing gum in his palm and held it out in front of him.

- Thank you, you are a true friend, - Shalva thanked him with a grin.

In a burst of generosity, Kote gave his friends a whole block of flavored chewing gum.

- You're a real gentleman! Boris noted.

- Avoye! Shalva admired. – Now at least treat the whole bus! Everything! I'm switching from smoking to chewing gum, - but suddenly decided.

"Brooklyn!" Boris read from the label.

"But the Armenians are good fellows, enterprising people, one of the first in our country to start producing all kinds of fragrant chewing gum," Shalva noted.

Vake is a prestigious district of Tbilisi

- Abandoned people always feel some kind of inferiority complex, have you noticed, Zaza? Alice asked. "Remember, hasn't anyone ever denied you?"

- It happened, - Zaza confirmed, - we choose, we are chosen ... this is far from the same thing.

- The most amazing thing is that as soon as you start getting used to something, this something starts to disappear!

- Much in a person's life depends on his views on life, but, perhaps, much closer kinship in spirit than in blood, - Zaza looked away from Alice.

"Life is one big picture," he continued, "which, as the Chinese say, is worth ten thousand words. And under each tombstone lies the history of the entire galaxy. Like a man small and great at the same time.

"Just as happy and unhappy at the same time," Alice confirmed. Of two hearts, one is always warm and the other cold. Cold is more expensive than diamonds, while warm has no price and is usually thrown away.

- Not to be loved is just a failure, says Camus, and not to love is a misfortune. But it is also true that we do not store, we lose, we grieve. Suffering, sorrow, after all, they also have a certain beauty, grace, and besides, they say, they lift into the sky.

- Real art comes from pain and suffering... - Alice put her hand on Zaza's hand.

A warm wave swept through my veins.

- We feel the same way, and we talk about the same thing, in different languages.

- I'm in Russian, and you're in Hungarian?

- No, - Alice chuckled, - you are from the position of the finder, and I am still looking for.

- It's not like that, Alice. We are always running after happiness and luck, even when we have them in our hands. Tomorrow we will be surprised at something else, but today... Chains of accidents and changes of state are continuous.

- Life is a cruel thing! A little mistake, a minor miscalculation, and everything flies somersaults, - complained Alice.

- Bewildered by fate, still do not despair, advises Kozma Prutkov. Time not only heals, but also puts everything and everyone in their place.

"How many faces women have," Zaza was surprised, seeing Alice in a role that seemed unnatural to her.

Most problems have very simple solutions.

- In this rapidly changing world, it is rare that what a person conceives and what he desires turns out.

- "IT LIFE" is life, - say the British.

"Se la vie is life," the French say.

Every person is as unhappy as he thinks he is.

What doesn't kill us makes us stronger.

.....

In the cabin of the bus, as well as in the outside, earthly laws reigned, developing according to the earthly, natural principles of development and movement, when one event gives rise to others, and those in turn the following.

The bus rushed to the next point of the tourist route, to the city of Esztergom. The sun rose higher and higher above the horizon, showering the passengers with light warmth and light. It overtook equally affectionately not only every person in every point of the globe, but also everything else, living and inanimate. And only the clouds, gloomy or white, in earnest or in jest, for a long time or for a short time, rose as usual cold and invisible walls-obstacles, separating not only people, but entire nations.

Original sin has swept like a chain reaction throughout the life of people, violating in essence the decay, the unity of absolute well-being and the integrity of the universe. The first disintegration predetermined and caused the next, and nothing could stop and reason with the already damaged consciousness. And even the Savior who appeared was not recognized and not recognized, moreover, he was mercilessly killed, and since then every life has been exhausted in vain searches. And only the rare chosen ones manage to grope for a long-lost, true joy.

- How joyful to see and feel the sun.

- Yes, my heart feels good, even though it's still cold behind the bus wall.

- Well, it's winter outside!

- You know, Rusa, I have a feeling, - Manana continued the conversation, - that we are in a greenhouse, and not just anywhere, but in our country house. So it's warm in winter.

- So you have a greenhouse at your dacha?

- Yes, my husband built it a couple of years ago. I assembled an elongated frame from reinforcing bars, tightened it with cellophane, and ...

- How amazing! So, do you have crops all year round? When does the earth rest? Why should she rest?

- How is that? She needs a break, and not just a winter one.

- So I am surprised that for a couple of years the greenhouse effect gave its results, and then it went wrong. I even made fun of my husband and called not by name, Theo, but Neo or Neu, plus a summer resident.

- So, loser?! both laughed.

- And here is my hubby Givi, also well done. I decided to carry out my own, home-based, food program, to arrange a small chicken coop in the loggia.

- Yah?! This is an amazing, original idea!

- Do not be ironic, but listen. In the beginning, everything went well, eggs, cock crow in the morning, clucking over each egg ... But as it got colder, the chickens began to die.

- By cold?

- Well no. From hunger!

- Yeah, understandable. Does hunger come with cold?

- No, the food turned out to be monotonous. There were not enough vitamins.

- Blimey! What is it your hubby so miscalculated?

- Well! I tell him why the hell did you run away from the village if you can't live without it.

- And what is he?

- What! What! If, he says, he had not come, he would not have met you. And I told him: come on, I say, I had more than enough fans!

- It's true! Yes, and I had enough of them, but it turned out ...

- A chance and a minute decide the fate of a person ...

.....

"The thing is, Nino, that philosophy intrudes into the chain of our thoughts and actions," Dito reasoned. - The ancients called it "Knowing". Its task is not to laugh or cry, but to understand.

- And how can this be correlated with the definition of being, if it is considered that it is something that has never been and never will be, but that is now or always!

- Nino responded to him, - very simply. Adequate to his definition. In general, a philosophical act consists in blocking in oneself the mania for thinking and presenting everything visually and objectively, as if with

using some pictures. And when we remove these pictures and subject references from consciousness, then we begin to think.

- Think, write and act differently, as Kafka says? What is the value of such thoughts?

- Worthless! It's true. If a person is far from harmony and perfection, which are forged by him. Dostoevsky believed that the whole goal towards which mankind aspires lies in only one, uninterrupted, process of achieving ... and not in the goal itself. Search activity is an integral property of all living things. Man himself is, first of all, and most of all, help and support to himself. And they are the same for the old, then for the small one - the mind.

- Therefore, it is necessary to work and jump all the time only in height. This is an ongoing process.

By noon, the bus drove up to Budapest, where tourists - travelers thoroughly refreshed themselves in a restaurant, and after a long seat on the bus, they took a short walk around the outskirts of the Hungarian capital.

- I do not want to go to this seedy Esztergom. He gave up on us, Zaza, - Shalva turned to the guide when we were driving away from the parking lot, - whether we finally stay or not in Budapest. Isn't it better?

Zaza thought for a moment, but recollecting himself, he immediately objected:

- You can't guys, it's inconvenient! We cannot neglect the Hungarian hospitality and the program that we are offered - throwing all the same, however, a questioning glance at Alice.

- I can't, Zaza, - she explained, - they can remove me and Shandor for this. And besides, there are a lot of things in Esztergom that are worth seeing, and where the guys can sell what has not yet been sold.

"Well, if so, then maybe it's worth a trip, guys," almost everyone agreed with one voice.

- It would be better if we went to Balaton, - Shalva grumbled and did not give up.

- And what to do there in the winter, Shalva, - Zaza doubted. No view, no fishing.

The group drove into Esztergom almost in the evening

- In this small town, with a population of forty thousand, located on the Danube, on the slopes of the Pilina Mountains, there are hot springs. This is a kind of resort city, - Alice entered into business, - with a fortress,

royal palace with a twelfth century chapel and a Renaissance hall of the late fifteenth century, which is now the residence of a Catholic churches in the country.

There is also a renaissance Bakoca chapel built in the early sixteenth century in the city.

A grandiose cathedral stands on a hill, and at its foot narrow streets winding with one-story old houses in the Boroque style. During the years of people's power, Esztergom became not only a center of tourism, but also an industry - with machine-tool, optical and radio engineering plants. Between Esztergom and Komar, along the Danube, a chain of industrial cities stretched, with oil refining, cement, pulp and paper and chemical enterprises.

- This is just what we need! - shouted Shalva, - I'll grab a couple of machines from here!

- Stop it! Denis and Boris pulled him up.

The group spent two nights and one full day at the city hotel in Esztergom. We traveled around the architectural monuments of the city, shared our impressions with those who went to trade.

Boris managed to sell his Zenith camera for one thousand five hundred forints.

- It would be better if they lent me, - Sergei was offended, - after all, what beautiful places they visited.

- Nothing, beautiful places are still waiting for us! Boris consoled him.

- Everything! The last one, Denisov, will be preserved until the last moment, - suggested Shalva, - otherwise there will be nothing left for memory.

- Wow, - Denis drawled, - how smart! He eats the proceeds from his camera, but wants to plow on mine to the last?!

- And what to do, - objected Shalva, - if you don't have any money to sell it!

- No, it's Sergey's fault for everything, - Boris cockily declared, - there was nothing for him to leave his Zenith at home!

- So he's not mine, but my sister's!

- Who cares! I would have bought her another, new one! Boris explained in turn.

1. Shno - (Georgian) enterprise.

- Yes, just the same, ran away! Buy one from us! Yes, and what's the point, he sold the sheep - he bought the sheep!

- Eee! Experience, let's say, would have gained!

I don't need that kind of experience! I'm not a merchant, - Sergey was offended.

- Leave the man alone! He says that he is not a huckster, - Denis supported him.

- He's a fool, - Shalva chuckled.

- Not a fool, but a candidate of science ... without five minutes!

- And this, Borka, is one and the same! Shalva laughed.

- How so one and the same! Denis asked.

- And so! While we were all earning money at our work, he was sitting at the research institute on a hundred rubles, and to this day he plows there.

Let's see what happens in a few years!

- Listen! Are you really stupid or are you pretending? Shalva frowned.

- All right, guys, in the end! Stop it! After all, happiness is not in money ... - Denis urged conciliatoryly.

- Happiness is not in money, but sometimes they are needed too! - Shalva said specially in broken Russian.

- Georges Courteline also noticed contempt for money mainly among those who did not have it! And William Maugham, for example, is right when he draws an analogy of money with a sixth sense, without which it is impossible to fully use the other five.

- And where did you hear that? Shalva was surprised. - Personally, I adhere to Remarque, who believes that money is an important thing. In general, a man without money is a bird without wings.

- With money, everything, everyone can, but you try without them.

- Oh, guys, a cool anecdote about this!

- Go ahead!

- So I decided, walking alone along the street with prostitutes working on it, to rent one, and asks: will you come with me? And she replies - I will go. But remember one thing! - What exactly? He takes her around the corner and whispers something in her ear. And suddenly a cry is heard: oh, you scoundrel, oh, you libertine! How dare you! Who do you think I am! The guy can barely get away from her. What did he want? - everyone rushed to the victim with questions, to which she was amazed, she responded: free of charge, can you imagine?

Sergei soon vanished, citing fatigue. The rest, after exchanging a few more anecdotes, went

look for Kako, provoke him to the next game of preference. Soon they were already promoting it in their room. They spent the evening in the hotel, in small groups, according to the principle they communicate with their own. Zaza was at a bar with Alice, Dato and Gia along with Leah nearby. Kako and Vano had a nice conversation with Ketino and Sofiko. Leah later, without waiting for her husband, joined Rusiko and Manana. Dito and Nino strolled in the hall, occasionally looking at

the TV screen. Sergei rested in the weak light of a night lamp and plunged into memories of Kyiv, trying to establish some kind of astral connection at a distance.

Julia began her second letter with the same thought that she would never send it, with the words: "I am writing to you - what else?" Tbilisi is waiting for you, I live in Kyiv, but ... "I would not give my heart to anyone in the world." I think of you often. Employment is increasing, although it is possible now to find more or less a normal, unemployed person. I would like to advance in the work on my dissertation, but history still teaches that it teaches nothing and often you have to work through "I can't." I think that human life is still great, and in this sense a person is not equal to himself. Another thing is how important and necessary everything that happens around a person and inside him, and how to choose from the whole mass and range of occurring phenomena and events the army of the necessary and necessary, which can be useful along the path of self-knowledge, self-contemplation and, of course, the main thing - resurrection. But at the same time, they say that everything that happens to a person and around him is far from being in vain and not by chance. Maybe this can be extended to my dissertation work and meeting with you? Will they be continued and useful in the future? I confess that what captivates me most of all is the sincerity, frankness and sincerity in our relations. I don't like the game of knowing each other, guessing, calculating. I am wary of all kinds of promises. I am always drawn to unraveling the mystery of one person's attraction to another.

In the meantime, Sergei began his next message.

"I got very lonely. You will probably find it very funny and surprising, but the evening hours in the hotel are tiring for me, although there are many friends around. With you mentally better, because you are smarter and cleaner

me. It looks like you managed to enter my inner world and even my life. All the time I catch myself thinking about you, about the development of our further relationship, which makes my heart turn over. I do not think that our friendship has become burdensome for us. So what's the problem, let's follow the natural course of things. Are you familiar with the sensations and feelings that follow the rejection of what you want? If you refuse me, will I share my feelings?

And besides, I have good luck and success, as they say, a light hand, a happy leg and a benevolent heart. You see what a braggart I am. Horror! but jokes aside. I would love to be with you right now."

Julia, as if she heard these words, burst into laughter.

- Why are you? her mother was surprised.

- I remembered something! Julia continued to smile.

“Life is an uninterrupted chain of events, none of which can be neglected,” Sergey continued meanwhile. The only certainty is today, now, and now I have you, paper and pen ... ”

- And tomorrow? he asked himself.

- And tomorrow, and always!

- Oh oh oh! How meaningful! - he heard his voice in himself, - do not promise the virgin young love eternal on earth ...

Agreeing with the voice, Sergei considered the last lines of the letter inappropriate and carefully crossed them out with paste. No, I can't write more. Memories float and interfere with concentration ... “Kako’s plaintive cry for help came from nearby:

- Help, rob, kill!

“No way these bastards are already undressing the poor fellow,” he thought of his friends.

- Sergey, help! - came clearly, he, as if stung, jumped out of bed and ran out of the room.

- Sergey, well, where are you? I helped you on the bus.

- Well! – threw running in Sergei.

Kako was sitting almost naked, in shorts and socks, however, in a dressing gown thrown over his shoulders, and the players demanded that he cover the loss in the next game by throwing off another piece of clothing.

- Sergey! They won't get it. I won't throw anything else away, but there is absolutely no money left. Got it, you bastards! squealed Kako.

Almost the entire tour group came running to the scream. As a result, Zaza handed Leah her naked husband, and she, covering herself, led him down the corridor to the room.

- I warned you not to mess with it! - Sergei scolded him, to which the victim pitifully rebuffed:

I didn't know they were so cruel!

- Well, okay, the clothes are understandable! Why is his nose so red? – sought Sergei.

- They hit me with cards so that I could undress! Kako admitted.

- You're completely crazy! Leah was indignant, pushing her husband forward. - Are not you ashamed? Look, how many people? What will they think and say?

Why don't they understand jokes? Kako defended himself.

- Jokes, not jokes, but facts are stubborn things! I feel uncomfortable seeing you like this and being next to you!

The commotion could not settle down for a long time, and the participants of the event did not disperse for a long time, so Zaza had to leave the scene in a raised tone.

- Denis, I still relied on you, but apparently I was wrong, - Zaza remarked bitterly.

- Zaza, it's not my fault, we agreed on this from the very beginning, - Denis looked down, - and it was already difficult to keep them.

Zaza, without any hope of a result, muttered something indifferently instructive and hurried away. The four of them were still guffawing for a long time, not restraining themselves from smirks and ridicule at the address of the person hiding behind the door.

- I don't understand you, - only Sergey doubted a little, - it's good at least, there are not so many people in the hotel.

XVI

In the morning, the bus had to wait for the late four, who hardly opened their eyes after the previous prowess. The whole group followed them with curious eyes until they sat down on the benches at the very back of the saloon.

The way to the long-awaited capital of Hungary, Budapest, was not long, only a few hours, but Zaza felt that spending this time with the group was far from an easy task, he expected anything from any of its members and was alert and alert. On the other hand, I felt more and more sharply the shoulder and support of tender Alice, without which, probably, I would have broken a long time ago and finally lost control both over myself and over the group. They once again came to each other's rescue, and Zaza caught himself thinking that he involuntarily drew a parallel between Alice and Nata, his wife, who, although she was several years older than Alice, was inferior to her in many ways, and especially in understanding his state of mind.

Nata demanded and took what she gave, while Alice clearly and sensitively caught his doubts, anxiety and hope, and he himself shared with her the impulses of his soul. Alice fell short of his wife outwardly, according to physical data, and for the first time he created for himself a symbiosis of two different women, lamenting:

"Well, why is it difficult and almost impossible to find a person who would meet all your standards?"

Alice, meanwhile, remained in her role, took the entire burden of the situation on herself and energetically learned a small Hungarian song with the group.

- So you need it, - Sergei blamed his friends, - they didn't want to learn popular, modern Georgian songs, so sing Hungarian ones!

- I don't want anything, I would take the group in full force, safe and sound, to Tbilisi, and let them live as they know, - Zaza admitted in alarm Alice, - they, apparently, don't put their parents in anything, and even more so me ...

- You'll take it, you'll take it! Everything will be all right, don't worry, Alice reassured him, just have a little patience. Nothing can be done, such a wave has now gone.

- Is it the same in Hungary?

- Yes, how to say, everyone comes across. See what team is going to be.

- That's what I'm talking about!

- In general, at all times, youth has been a mirror of the life of society.

- You know, I had to work with her a lot, but I must admit that I have never come across such a person as in our group, - Zaza opened up.

- See how good it is! You have gained experience. So try to make it good for you in the future.

- You know, when the caravan turns back, the unhealthy and backward are in front, and I would not like to lead them.

- If there is a choice, of course! And if not? After all, we often find ourselves out of work and not where we would like, but where life puts us.

- Oh, this life, our villainous fate, - sang Zaza, - it is like a rosary, and the philosopher, sorting through them, chuckles in his mustache.

Well, take an example from him!

- All this would be funny if it weren't so sad... Human life is a lot of ado about nothing!

- The beginning of all wisdom is the recognition of a fact. Business people who don't know how to deal with anxiety die young. So get a grip Zaza. Not everything around you is worth your life and your health. Is it possible to consider a successful person who pays for a promotion with an ulcer or angina pectoris? Is it worth it to master the whole world and lose seemingly a little.

- Probably not, - Zaza had to agree, remembering, moreover, that the reasoning of the recently read Kettering is a well and correctly formulated problem - a half-solved problem.

"Fear, anxiety, hatred... and the inability to adapt to the real, existing situation and reality are the main factors that cause killer diseases," Alice continued.

“Perhaps someday I will reassure you with these words,” Zaza suggested, “because they both justify us and punish us at the same time.

- Of course, - Alice agreed with him, - that's why we are people and we need each other. From the side it is always more visible, and easier

give practical advice necessary for the fastest and simplest way out of simple situations.

- You know, there is such a medical formula, - Zaza remembered, - a disease is a life constrained in its freedom. Dito reminded me of Merab Konstantinovich Mamardashvili's idea that the path to philosophy runs through trials and even suffering, thanks to which we gain irreplaceable and unique experience.

- Ay ... again he hesitated with his philosophy, - Shalva invaded the conversation with his remark.

The mood of the group and the general atmosphere on the bus improved inversely with the distance to the promised and desired Budapest.

- Budapest - the capital of Hungary - is spread on the Danube, - Alice's speech poured at the entrance to the city. - It is inhabited by more than two million people.

- Almost twice as much as in our Tbilisi? Shalva muttered.

- Wait a minute! Boris stopped him. - Let's listen.

- And like this every time! Shalva snapped indignantly. - I should have become not a civil engineer, but a guide, then I would have been paid more attention!

- There is a university in Budapest named after L. Etvesh, - Alice reported.

- When are the entrance exams? Dato asked.

“Wait a minute, Datoshka, let me listen,” Mziya also started up.

- No, he's not joking, we really are considering where to go - Gia supported his friend, - I don't want something at home, but we would be happy to pass to the University of Budapest.

- To the Georgian sector, right, Gia? Zaza joked.

- Of course, boss, what are you talking about! Gia confirmed from the gallery of the bus.

- No question! Dato supported him.

- How not? Alice was surprised. - There is, of course, and not one.

A light chuckle passed through the bus, a little embarrassing for Alice.

- Did I say something wrong?

- No, no, - Zaza reassured her, - everything is in order, these are their regular antics!

- Medical, economic, polytechnical institutes also work in Budapest.

"Just like ours," Shalva muttered.

- And how much does it cost to get a medical job here? Dato asked.

- And now I will give you the most important and necessary preliminary information. And questions later. Okay? – tactfully dodged Alice from cool questions of some members of the group. – There is an Academy of Sciences in Budapest.

- Wah! Kako, Serge, this is your part, "Boris exclaimed enthusiastically, unable to restrain himself.

- Wait, don't make noise, let me hear! - Shalva took revenge from him.

- As well as a music academy, many theaters, museums, sports entertainment and scientific and educational centers. Aquincum, famous from the time of the Roman Empire, is also located here.

- Aquincum es incha?

"Aquincum was a city until 499 AD," Alice explained, guessing Denis's question.

- Wa! Shalva was surprised. Does Alice also know Armenian?

- Since the hundred and seventh year of our era, it has been a Roman province. The ruins on the territory of our city, I am sure, will attract you with their beauty.

- Shall we shoot? Boris slapped Shalva on the shoulder.

- Oh, yes, I completely forgot! - he leaned towards Denis, who was sitting in front.
- So how?

- Leave me alone, let me listen!

- Do not want as you want! Shalva was offended. What do I need more than anyone?

- You can see the remains of the quarters of artisans, an amphitheater, defensive walls, aqueducts, sanctuaries, a palace with mosaic floors ... - Alice did not stop. - The city itself consists of three historical parts - Pest, Buda and Obuda - and has been known since one thousand one hundred and forty-eight. These parts were united only in 1872. Mechanical engineering, instrument making, electronics, and transport are developing in the city. In the fifties of the fourteenth century, Buda became the capital of the Hungarian

Es incha - (Armenian) what is it?

kingdoms. From 1541 to 1686, the city was under the Ottoman yoke, and at the beginning of the eighteenth century it fell under the rule of the Habsburgs. In a word, you will find many meetings, excursions, impressions.

We will live in a small, cozy, five-story, modern tourist hotel "WIEN" not far from the center. A special cultural and educational program will be distributed to everyone, and you will be able to see the sights either on your own or with us.

- That is, now I'm already taking up my functions, - Zaza smiled.

- So, yes! he began in an undertone. - Attention please! We will be in Budapest for five days. I hope everyone will behave with dignity, they will not dishonor themselves or the country from which they came. I ask Mzia to look after the guys. And you, Denis, be on your guard. Don't let up! Sofiko and Ketino! Don't leave Kote and Wano. And I rely on Dito and Nino as well as on Rusiko and Manana. Well, and to you, Leah, I suggest not to let your husband go far from you.

- This is enough for me at home, - Leah laughed, and the whole group followed her.

So, who else is left? Zaza, meanwhile, was looking at the bus.

- Have you forgotten yourself, boss? Dato shouted.

- Myself? Zaza thought. - I give myself to my colleague Alice, - deepening the cheerful mood.

"Look, don't go back on your words later," Alice laughed.

- Boris, what are you staring at? Zaza asked, joining the curious look. In front of the bus left at the entrance to the hotel, Zaza noticed a new, red, long "Ikarus" with the inscription "Sovavtotrans".

- Yeah, no matter how much you read edifications to the wolf, he still looks into the forest.

In response, Boris, and with him the whole bus laughed.

- Guys, I beg you, no nonsense and no hooliganism, - Zaza almost begged.

- Don't be afraid, chief, everything will be hockey, - they reassured him from the far ranks.

- So, then, we will agree: after paperwork and resettlement, we meet in the hotel lobby so as not to lose today. In one hour?

- In two!

- Well, well, let it be in two, - Zaza agreed, looking at his watch and offering to check the rest on them. – And I also suggest that everyone together celebrate and commemorate in an expensive restaurant our safe arrival in the capital of Hungary, handsome Budapest.

- Hurrah! shouted Shalva, who was supported by some of the other members of the group. – drove and we were driving, finally arrived!

Soon everyone, dispersing by numbers, according to the promise, received from Alice a program for a stay in Budapest, in February, one thousand nine hundred and ninety. Representatives of the travel agency took Alice with them in a car, promising to return her to the group by the set time, in two hours.

Shalva, right in his clothes, lounged on the bed, twirled a program written in Hungarian and, puffing on a hastily lit cigarette, expressed deep dissatisfaction:

- Wah, if only they printed it in English, then-oh! - and brushed the ashes into an ashtray thrown right on the pillow.

- Stop smoking on your bed, well! Boris protested. - We didn't have time to go into the room, but already hang up the ax, go to the balcony and smoke there. Denis is great too! He is a non-smoker himself and takes a non-smoking Sergey to his room, and this steam locomotive slips me.

Shalva did not move his ear, but only muttered:

- At least look at the pictures, or what? And that's better than playing cards and fooling around.

- As if you yourself are so smartly snorting in Hungarian!

- No, of course not, but I'm not complaining.

- Are you just picking on me? Yes?! How was it in the construction team?

- Then, in the summer, everything was open, smoke as much as you want. And now outside the window is winter, although the truth is warm.

- It was really great! Shalva agreed.

Warm evenings, noisy hostel for construction students, construction work. The swimming complex of the future "Laguna - Vera" was erected in the most beautiful corner on the right bank of the Kura. They lived in Vake, not far from

Turtle Lake, in rooms literally filled with beds. Apart from Denis's group, there were several other groups from the Polytechnic Institute. In general, they lived in peace and harmony, even though Denis's group sometimes flared up either half-jokingly, or half-seriously, small skirmishes.

That evening, the memories of which were now surfacing in the memory of Shalva, who was lounging on the bed, the group, after another day of work, climbed Turtle, as the Tbilisi residents affectionately and briefly called this lake. We swam, played football and, having had dinner at the hostel, went to our rooms. Before going to bed, they exchanged jokes and anecdotes. A guy from Denis's group, nicknamed Bender that evening, could not stand Shalva's mockery, rushed at him with his fists and dragged him by the legs to the balcony door:

- Yes, I'll throw you out of here!

Sergey was one of the first, barely holding back his laughter, tried to prevent this and recapture Shalva from a powerful enemy, which turned out to be not so easy.

Fortunately, other guys arrived in time and helped separate the fighters.

.....

- Do you think I forgot how Benya wanted to throw me off the balcony? Shalva reminded Boris through a cackle. - From the third floor.

- And now there will be no one to save you!

- All right, I'll put it out!

- That's good, well done!

The program, a brochure of thirty-two pages, was hidden under a dense colorful cover with photos of supermarkets, restaurants, hotels, the Danube River embankment, a fisherman's bastion that enchants with its beauty ...

- Here, Konopaty, how much is there! Shalva shook the book. – Concerts, ballets, cigarettes, operettas, musical and literary life, folklore, exhibitions, museums, planetariums, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, casinos, gambling houses, roulette... We live!

- The main thing now is to correctly distribute the funds so that there is enough for everything.

- It turns out that you can also rent a car, phone numbers and addresses of rental services are indicated.

- Apsus, the group and the guide are hampering us, otherwise they would have cleared up

1. Apsus (cargo). - what a pity.

to the fullest, "Boris expressed regret.

- Here is a good advertisement for the Trombitas restaurant, - Shalva pointed his finger at the brochure. - The Swiss airline Swissair offers its services. And here are the hotels. And here is a list of advertised several well-known hotels in Budapest, such as Budapest, Bartok, Fortuna, Flandria, Bekashmedyer, Platanus. ABOUT! Here's the street plan! Advertisement for the Moulin Rouge festival. Here's to getting in!

- Well!

- Maxim variety show, fantastic revue, super magic show, international attraction, "Crazy Cabaret". Live I say!

- Is this possible in a Soviet country? Boris asked ironically.

- Of course not!

- I remember, it seems, the “Emergency Flight”, when our ship was seized and they are trying to force our sailors to give up life in the Soviet country. And yet, do you remember the moment when Stirlitz is asked why you don’t like the Soviet Union, and he answers:

- The fact that there are no brothels in it! Shalva picked it up.

- That's the way it is with us!

- And sports complexes! Oh-oh-oh... Look!

Soon the group gathered in the lobby of the hotel.

Alice, with the help of Zaza, introduced her to the plan of stay and the sequence of excursions in the capital.

During the day, everyone was to be together, and in the evenings, everyone was left to himself.

On the first evening, the group, in one of the fashionable restaurants, celebrated their safe arrival in the capital.

The relationship of the members of the group with each other and with the guides developed, as Zaza managed to notice, according to the wave

lines. During the general feasts, everyone approached and rallied, but after tricks and antics they scattered, so that he could expect anything from everyone.

Fortunately, that day and evening there were no serious incidents, and Zaza calmly escorted Alice late in the evening to the apartment she rented in one of the central districts of the city, told funny and entertaining stories, and they did not even notice how they approached the house.

- How, so fast? Zaza was surprised.

- Yes! We did not go around, but along a short ...

- What a pity, but I would like to walk with you all night tonight. Look how warm and starry the night is.

- We are warmly dressed, - Alice barely restrained her laughter, - and plus heating!

Zaza gazed into her eyes.

- Don't, - Alice held out her hand, - it's late, it's time to go home. Tomorrow is a busy day for both of us.

- Well, let him wait. I'm interested to see how you live there, in the attic of the second floor.

- Not today, Alice touched Zaza's cheek with her lips, quickly turned and ran towards the door.

He looked after her for a long time and nevertheless set off on his return journey, happy and free.

"The creatures of a woman are still strange," whispered the cold, starry winter sky with light clouds driven by the north wind. He walked past bars, restaurants, mini and supermarkets that were open at night, marveled at and enjoyed the cleanliness and order, trying to find the answer to the question from the stars when his country would achieve this.

XVII

The next morning, Alice took a group to look at ancient architectural monuments and was pleased to find with what interest most of the group listened to her and asked interesting questions.

Of particular interest to the members of the group were the remains of the Roman city of Akminkuma, the current museum. They examined and photographed the remains of the quarters of artisans, defensive walls, an amphitheater, part of the water supply network, sanctuaries, a palace with mosaic floors. They were convinced of the flourishing Aquincum reached when it became the Roman province of Pannonia.

The four friends bickered out of habit, going from whispers to shouts and from shouts back to whispers.

Denis caught Zaza's reproachful, stern look. Distracted from their information and Alice. Everyone looked around and shrugged.

- You will fool around! Come back immediately, - Denis hissed after the fleeing friends, - it's uncomfortable ... the whole group is looking at you ...

- Okay, what happened, it happened, "come back, I'll forgive everything!" Boris answered him.

The group watched with interest the curious events unfolding.

- Guys ... ah! Lie down, air, - Dato suddenly shouted to the sound of a passenger airliner flying overhead at high altitude, and squatted down, causing a response from his friend Giya.

- Kindergarten! Zaza was outraged.

- Zaza, if you are not interested, you can interrupt this conversation and generally leave this place!

- What are you, Alice, excuse me for these undisciplined! But I, and everyone else is interested, and even very much! I can even add to your story something from the history of our country of this time. In the seventy-fifth year of our era, the Roman

emperor Vespasian and his sons Titus and Domitian helped our king Mirdat II to strengthen the stone wall in the city of Mtskheta, and in the one hundred and fourteenth year, the Georgians participated in the eastern campaign of the Roman emperor Trajan against Parthia, admired the Romans and Parthians with their courage . Our King of Kartli Farsman II with his family and retinue, at the invitation of the Roman Emperor Anthony Pius, visited Rome. And, as historians write, Rome was delighted with the Georgian king and those accompanying him. And on the Field of Mars, an equestrian statue of the Georgian King was even erected.

- Yes, - Alice smiled, - the Roman Empire was so great and strong that its tentacles reached many countries of our continent. And all the more, it cost nothing for her to reach our country in the center of Europe.

The tour of the ancient city of Aquincum lasted almost until noon. Many photographs were taken. Toward the end of the tour, Uncle Alice joined the group, a handsome, thin man in a warm, long gray raincoat. He had a friendly talk with Zaza, asked how he liked Budapest and if there were any problems.

- Problems only with home, - smiled back Zaza.

- Yes, unfortunately, it often happens, - Istvan agreed.

- Like you, too?

Uncle, who, as it turned out, was called Istvan, complained about the difficulties, even failures in Alice's life, especially personal, asked to be gentler with her.

Zaza nodded his head in response, agreed, even a little surprised:

- What are you speaking about? Certainly! We are great friends, why should I darken this friendship?

- So that's what I'm talking about!

"I don't quite understand you, Istvan," Zaza admitted. - I told her, in principle, about all the main things that I considered necessary for her to know about me.

- I don't speak Russian very well, but I want to let you know: don't deny her and her friendship, you know, we say that a person is a pill for a person - but I didn't want her to be disappointed once again. I don't mean you now. Don't get me wrong, I'm speaking in general terms. Do you understand me?

- No problem, Istvan, okay!

- You are a real man, Zaza! Alice really isn't wrong about you...

- She herself, a born leader, knows how to find a common language with people and gets along well with them

- Perhaps, yes ... But the main thing about her is that she loves people in general, but ... but when it comes to a specific person, especially on a personal level, she has a conflict with herself.

- Yes, it's really easier to love all of humanity than just one ...

Alice hurried to take advantage of her unexpected freedom and went about her business.

Kako and Leah went to the festival-review at the Moulin Rouge cabaret according to the international program, which took place along Nagumezo Street 17 and invited Zazu, who remained without his function that evening, with them. They were joined by the oldest ladies in the group, Rusiko and Manana.

Kote and Wano suggested to their girls, as they already considered, to wave to the Pannonia restaurant. This restaurant hosted three maxim variety shows at the same time:

fantastic revue, super magic show and international attractions, as well as the latest crazy cabaret program.

Mzia also dragged her young guys, Dato and Giya, to one of the prestigious nightclubs.

Dito and Nino went to a concert of symphonic music, which both were crazy about.

The four acted on the principle of contentment with what was available: why look for something unknown outside, when the known is right in front of your nose. The principle especially suited Boris, who called the girls from the opposite direction ranking group.

Boris was active, quickly "picked up" three girls at once, invited them to a table to get acquainted with his friends. Soon, Boris visually distributed the girls among friends, the couples formed, or rather, formed by Boris, circled in a slow dance in the semi-darkness of the dance floor of the bar-restaurant, under a large mirror ball of light music rotating on the ceiling.

- It will be necessary to find someone for Sergey, - the girl dancing with him suggested to Boris, - I will call.

- Don't, - Boris refused, - Sergey is my own, personal bodyguard and I'm not interested in someone diverting his attention.

- Well, why not?

- The fact is that we are not exactly tourists, - Boris mysteriously whispered, - we are here on a mission.

- Yes? Can not be?

- Yes, may be.

Sergei, meanwhile, drank champagne and ate his cake.

- Hey, you, Serge, - Shalva moved his foot, - not really! Bear in mind that you are our bodyguard and behave appropriately.

- Yes, since when? Sergey asked.

- Ever since Boris appointed you.

- How interesting?!

- Not interesting, but honorable and responsible!

The couples, formed by Boris, either sat at the table, cheerfully discussing issues of interest to young people, then danced, mostly slow dances to the music of a small orchestra of the hotel bar - restaurant.

The girls looked at Sergei with wary interest, who, according to Shalva's information, behaved like a uniformed bodyguard. Soon, however, this role bored him and, having apologized, he, contrary to the demands of his friends to stay, went to his room.

"Enough, nothing," he objected to himself, "you can do without a conductor, as in that joke, but in our case, without a bodyguard."

"He needs to leave," Boris pointedly raised his finger, after which everyone had to be silent.

Sergey, entering his hotel room shared with Denis, immediately felt the good power of silence and tranquility.

How much noise can a person stand? Throwing the key on the trellis, he went to the bathroom. As he washed, he felt his head hurt. He compared the fatigue that was now overwhelming him in the construction team and, remembering how easily it was washed off with water, he took a shower. Refreshed under warm water and gained new strength, he took up his fourth letter to Yulia.

"Hello my gentle friend, disturber of my peace of mind. I count the days on my fingers, after which I hope to see you again. I confess that I used to consider this calculation childish, funny and amusing, but now I realized that I was deeply mistaken. I look forward to any news from you, although I confess that for a long time I do not dare to print your letters. Fingers tremble, breathtaking.

"Are you really going crazy? Sergei looked up from the letter. Well, well, go, so go to the fullest.

"Yulechka, for some reason your letters reach me much longer than, as I think, mine reach you, although the distance between us is the same."

I have written to you more than once that if I take on some business, I put my whole soul into it, give myself to it completely without a trace and bring it to the end. So I put a lot of mental strength into letters to you. And so I want them to get to you as soon as possible. But it is one thing to send, and quite another to receive. I don't know if your letters even exist, but I read them and the thought creeps into me that a ghost is involved in all this, leading us, you

you follow me, almost the same life path, and I would very much like you to pass the tests, for which, as the great Dante wrote: "And I, like all retribution, did not escape!"

In my time, I swung at a lot, and I had reasons for this, but they forced me to sit down, only on the candidate landing strip. Now everything is indifferent to me, but in that recent memorable time I was more captured by the process of work. But I believe that the soul is much more reasonable, praised and declared by all reason. It is no coincidence that the great physiologist Pavlov called the heart, the abode of the human spirit, the second mind of man, although I would call it the first. I can even argue about this with any opponent and call for help the words of the great Goethe that he bows his head before a great mind, and kneels before a great soul. To find in life that only kindred soul that would bring me to my knees and to which one could simply, humanly fall down. This is a lot, this, you can say everything that a person needs for complete happiness, absolutely without contact. But why do people fear and avoid it. Well, cruel time has its own laws, and one has to take into account and take into account the objective reality. I will not hide, in one of your letters something painfully pricked my heart, it seemed that you were far from being completely liberated and that you were afraid and afraid of something. Leave, I beg you, your fears, I remember my promises. I confess my weaknesses. As a child, older sisters pampered me with warmth and affection that was too much for a boy. With their marriage, this stopped. We have a proverb: do not accustom the unaccustomed, but do not wean the accustomed. So semiit happened with me too. The sisters are not up to me, they are now overcome by their family problems and worries. Having once known the taste of happiness and well-being, you are already constantly looking for it in another place and with others, you are waiting and cherishing the hope of finding it again, though not by any. Once I had an unpleasant conversation with one of the older sisters. Offended by me, she told another sister about this and at the same time reminded her how happy they were as children when I was born, they could not have thought that I would become like that.

Although it is true that all children are adorable, but over time they change a lot and lose a lot. Why it happens? Why does life twist us so? And how are you

business on this? How is your family? Who loves more, who loves less? So I want to know as much as possible about you, about your thoughts and feelings, it would be nice to know about the possible little secrets of your tender soul. I'm sorry if I'm asking too much. Life is so dreary and lonely, even though there are so many people around and so much going on. Sometimes I want to share with someone, even very important, mysterious ... but, alas, there are things that you can't tell everyone about, and there are more of them every day.

It seems to me that I could reveal the secrets of the soul to you. Isn't this true love? Even though we don't know each other that much. On the trip, I think a lot about you, about us, with naive hope I expect at least a little news from you. Don't go crazy... Thank you for your friendship and warmth. I wish you all the blessings of life and great creative success. So that everything is always good, good. Your friend Sergei.

Familiar voices and female laughter were heard from the street. He hurried to the balcony and saw Ketino returning to the hotel arm in arm with Kote, and Sofiko with Vano. "Happy," he thought involuntarily, "happy that they found each other on the trip." Apparently, in a chic maxim variety show, they spent the evening very cheerfully and pleasantly.

Vano and Sofiko, approaching the hotel, slowed down and, apparently, were kissing.

"Oh," thought Sergey, "we've gone too far."

Young people with a cheerful noise passed the hall and moved along the corridors to the rooms. At the very door, Vano held Sofiko by the hand and, not allowing her to enter, pressed her tightly against the wall. Apparently, excited by the recent drinking, Sofiko did not resist, did not evade kisses, and Vano, emboldened, dragged her into his room. Feeling that she was losing control of herself, she found the strength to pray:

- Don't, Wano. Please don't!

The timid request was not heard, and Vano, more and more giving free rein to his hands, dragged her further, so that, before she had time to notice, she ended up in the guys' room. Wano acted quickly and decisively, as if he was afraid to miss an opportunity that happened to him.

Ketino became alarmed and, distracted from the exchange of opinions with Kote about the recently seen, dazzling shows, exclaimed:

- Sofiko is nowhere to be seen! How could they not do stupid things there ?!

- Well, what are you! They are children, right? They themselves know their business. They will figure it out! Kote tried to calm her down.

The conversation lost its recent liveliness, and Ketino admitted that she was very tired and would like to rest.

- Well, I'll go, - Kote reluctantly got up and, looking askance at Ketino, made a slight cautious movement in her direction.

- No need! Ketino evaded. - Thank you for a wonderful evening.

Kote hung around the hotel and, making sure that he would not be able to get into his room soon, turned to Denis and Sergo, who were already almost asleep, who arranged for him to spend the night at their place, on a folding chair.

This night in the Budapest hotel passed very quickly for almost all members of the group, and in the morning they were already expected at the entrance by Alice and the driver Sandor with his bus.

XVIII

In the saloon, the group greeted everyone's appearance with liveliness and joy, exchanging enthusiastic impressions of the previous evening in fabulous Budapest, advising each other not to miss and visit what they themselves saw.

- Yes, yes, very good! It seems that we are already all assembled and, most importantly, without delays and excesses, - Alice began her work.

- Well, what. It's great to see the discipline growing before our eyes," Alice praised the group.

Clever and wonderful teacher, thought Zaza, Makarenko himself could learn from her. But no matter how praise went to their heads.

- Let's go, - Alice announced solemnly, - to see one of the most beautiful sights of Budapest - the Fisherman's Bastion.

- Oh! - revived in the cabin.

- And why the bastion? one of the group asked.

- Bastion is a French word, - Alice explained, - it is a polygonal fortification in the form of a ledge of a fortress fence, for shelling fortresses and ditches. The fisherman's bastion was built at one time by fishermen to hold all-round defense in a siege.

Alice embarked on a historical digression, and the cheerful good-natured driver Sandor, easily and gently raced the bus to the destination of the trip.

- What is a fishing bastion, ask me, - Denis startled himself.
- Are the fishermen holed up in the fortress? Boris clarified.
- Leave, for God's sake! Do you want him to take over? – Shalva caught on. -

Enough, you've heard!

Denis, squinting and leaning back in his seat, really did not miss the opportunity to remember his fishing exploits on Lake Jandari near Tbilisi, near the village of Marneuli, a paradise for anglers. He experienced the charm of fishing there more than once and once decided to get his friends there - classmates, including the three who now accompanied him on a trip to Hungary. True, he was somewhat apprehensive that he did not know how to swim at all, and he was a little afraid to sail in a boat far from the coast. Friends encouraged him and convinced him that he would not have to sail far in those places, that the fish there sat mainly in the reeds along the coast and not far from them. So, having consulted and seemed to have prepared himself physically and mentally, he began to fulfill his glorious intention from the fact that he almost overslept on the planned morning and would probably have ruined the fishing if his father had not accidentally woken him up.

- Hey, great fisherman! He shook his shoulder in surprise. - The fish will swim away! Get up!

In the morning, jumping out of bed, Denis saw that he was late for a meeting with the guys, hastily got ready, flew like a bullet to the station and arrived in time for the train that was already departing, on the steps of one of the carriages of which he jumped already on the move. and realized with horror that in a hurry I forgot at home carefully prepared and tested fishing rods. With him was only a small duffel bag with the essentials for a two-day weekend and some groceries.

The guys joked, reassured him, promised to lend their extra fishing rods.

The whole first day, Saturday, we spent in boats, in the reeds, in the rain, we did not catch a single standing fish, and so, only occasionally came across small fry.

The beginning of the second day, Sunday, was also marked by hail. So the fishermen mostly spent it in the fisherman's house, on the lake, located not far from the boat rental station. For the first time, Denis called this house a fisherman's bastion, which protected them from inclement weather.

- Where does so much moisture come from in the sky, - then Denis thought with annoyance, making sure that there would be no end to such weather.

By the end of grief - fishing by fishermen was, as they say, not up to fat, if I were alive, none of them thought about fish or fishing, and all thoughts were directed to how to safely get to the evening train so that get home safe and sound. The

fishermen left the mountain in the afternoon, like the French in Moscow in the winter of 1812, chilled, wet, exhausted, irritated, depressed, downcast, embarrassed, offended, bitten by mosquitoes and even with a headache.

Denis looked at everyone from the sidelines and recalled the boasting and promises of everyone to catch such big fish and in such numbers as no one, anywhere and ever.

- Here you are, your ambassadors, - Denis laughed in his heart at the fishermen - losers.

“What a shame what my family will say,” another question worried him, “no, in a certain way it will be necessary to have time to go to the market before coming home, to buy at least some fish, otherwise they will laugh at you, you won’t be ashamed. Especially the son-in-law, it will rush and let's remember our unfortunate grandmother Rosa.

No, I obviously can’t stand it, it’s better to go back and take refuge in the ill-fated fishing bastion. But this is no longer possible, he realized, looking at his wet and muddy boots. - But, on the other hand, I may not be in time for the market, and besides, in this form ... With such painful thoughts, Denis walked next to a group of guys, trying to find some way out.

“Go calmly and don’t splash mud,” remarked Boris, looking around - and he is covered in mud, and you are still throwing mud at me.

- That! What do you want from me! I go as best I can. If you don't like it, then step aside, - Shalva snapped.

- Let him go ahead. You don’t know, the Jews should be the first everywhere, - his classmate Simon joked to whom Shalva gave the nickname Fat Man.

- Move away, I say, - Shalva sneered.

- That! Shouted! You don't have enough space, do you? - Sergey also raised his voice. - Me too! Go and go!

The impending silence was broken by one of the fishermen:

- Guys, you have no bulls left? The guy so often asked the guys for gobies and so deftly fished that even in the rain, hiding in a raincoat, he managed to catch fish from the lake - gobies, which earned him the nickname Goby not without reason.

- You have to quit smoking, - Denis suggested to him.

- I know that I can quit smoking, because I did it a thousand times, - Mark Twain's bull recalled.

No, guys, in kind, explain, did we go fishing or play cards and drink?

- What, don't you know? Shalva recalled. - One smart person said that fishing is the same booze, only in rubber boots.

- A fishing rod is a stick with a hook on one end and a fool on the other.

- Then it was necessary to discuss ahead of time that we were not going to go fishing, but to get drunk, - Denis did not let up.

- How, isn't that why you left your fishing rods at home?

- I did not leave, but I forgot!

- I forgot, I forgot, you need to drink less, then you will remember more!

- You might think that I'm the same drunkard as you, Simon!

- Don't you remember the law of Archimedes according to V. Zudov? That any liquid placed in the body will displace as many thoughts as there are degrees in the liquid.

"And Dean Martin generally claims that a person is not drunk if he is able to lie on the floor without holding on to it," Boris declared proudly.

- Abraham Lincoln was right: if the use of alcohol harms people, then it does not stem from

the use of a bad thing, but from the wrong use of a good thing.

- Don't say anything, right!

They paddled through the mud, moving farther and farther away from the lake. Nearby, a group of local, Marneuli, mostly women appeared, who were moving in a chain along the travel road and rummaged around with their hands on the ground, flooded with water that had come out of the lake after heavy rains.

Woe - the fishermen were surprised, amused and alerted by this spectacle. Coming closer, they guessed that the women were catching crucians, carp and gobies that had swum out of the lake to the side of the road. The catch was collected in bags, bags, cellophane bags. Despite fatigue and haste, with dubious faith in luck, Denis, having taken off his shoes, set off across the backwater. Having crawled with his hand over the water-filled mounds, stones and grass, he nevertheless found a medium-sized carp buried in the slush and, remembering the famous Bléro, with no less joy than he, threw him onto the road, under the feet of his friends, who persuaded him to quickly tie up with a senseless business and hurry to the station so as not to miss the last evening train.

But the joy of the first success pushed Denis, who was depressed, to the next one.

One of the locals noticed that in the morning such hand fishing was much richer and more intense than now, when almost all the fish had already been caught and frightened away.

Nevertheless, Denis managed to find up to a dozen fish slightly smaller than the average size under the waning water.

- That's it, the last one, and I'm out! he reassured his friends impatiently waiting for him on the road.

The search for the last fish lasted longer than the previous ones, it was felt that the capture had done its job.

- Here, here, I finally caught it! - Denis shouted with joy, grabbing the slippery smooth body of prey.

But his last joy in this fishing was short-lived. An elderly woman from among the locals, with surprise, tried to pull her leg out of the water, tightly clasped in the hands of Denis, who did not stop admiring his successes and good luck.

On the shore, the guys were bursting with laughter.

- Laugh, laugh as much as you like! - Denis triumphed already at home, upon his return, when his father, having filled the bathtub with water, let the live fish into it.

- Well done! he exclaimed contentedly. - You will come out, if you haven't already, a real fisherman! And it is necessary, in such weather!

- Oh, my poor grandmother Rosa! - did not miss the opportunity to remember the ancestor, Denis's son-in-law. - If she saw these unfortunate fish ...

While Denis squinted and leaned back on the bench in the tourist bus, immersed in memories. Alice told tourists about the sights of the Hungarian capital and the fishing bastion.

"Practically all the inhabitants of the country are drawn to Budapest," she noted, "state institutions are concentrated here. Budapest plays the role of not only a center of industry, but also of science and culture, and therefore a trip to the capital is a common and frequent thing for many.

- We have the same thing - screwed Zaza.

- Yes, - Alice agreed, - people go to the capital on business, to theaters, to concerts, exhibitions, to shops to see the latest fashion, for a thousand other reasons and reasons, not to mention hundreds of thousands of workers and employees, students and students, every day coming from nearby areas. I think you have already noticed, getting acquainted with BudApesht, that first of all, the rare beauty of two sharply contrasting banks of the Danube catches the eye - dissected - hilly right, Buda, and flat, flat left Pest.

“By the way, Tbilisi is similar to Budapest in this way,” Zaza remarked.

- Yes, like Vake and Saburtalo on the right bank of the Kura and Nakhlovka - Sanzona - Gldani on the left!

- And what does Denis think about this?

- He seems to have taken a nap!

- Yes, I don't sleep, I don't sleep, calm down, I just remember the fishing bastion in our homeland, on Lake Jandari, I compare it with the local one.

- A ... That's it!

- This contrast is emphasized by the peculiar historical and architectural appearance of individual parts

city, - continued Alice, as if interrupting those who were talking in parallel with her.

- I have already said that the unification of the three previously independent cities of Pest, Buda and Obuda into one happened in 1873, so officially the city of Budapest is considered young, although its history goes back to the distant past, which is confirmed by what we examined yesterday in Obuda the ruins of the old Roman city - the stronghold of Aquincum.

- Of the three named cities, Buda occupied a special place, which has been the capital of Hungary since the fourteenth century.

- Listen, how does she know so much?

- How much we talk about our native Tbilisi!

- Shut up, let me listen!

Some began to make notes in notebooks.

- Not much is left of medieval Buda. The most famous Gothic architectural monument of Budapest is the graceful Matthias Church on the fortress hill, which we will definitely visit.

Buda was in the hands of the Turks for a long time. The Turkish invasion, the battle for Buda, fires destroyed a significant part of the city. After restoration, in the oldest part of Buda, on the Fortress Hill and in the parts of Pest adjacent to the Danube, baroque and neoclassicism began to dominate in architecture.

The dominant place on the Royal Hill is occupied by the former Royal Palace, which now houses the Hungarian National Gallery, the Historical Museum, the Museum of the Labor Movement and the country's largest library. Széchenyi. Palaces, residential buildings, ancient churches and monuments adjacent to the fortress wall and the decorative Fisherman's Bastion were completely restored after

the Second World War. It was built at the end of the last century on the site where the defense of the fortress was entrusted to the fishermen's workshop.

- The fortress hill was decorated with several new buildings. Among them is a new monumental hotel.

To the south of the Fortress Hill is Mount Gellert, on which the Liberation Monument in

the memory of Soviet soldiers who gave their lives for the liberation of the Hungarian people from fascism, among them, perhaps, there were many Georgians, - Alice made a gesture to her guests, - we will definitely visit this monument.

A little more patience and I'll be done, Alice noticed the group was a little tired. In the nineteenth century, Buda went beyond the walls. Large highways, characteristic of a big city, appeared, mansions and hotels grew one after another in the greenery of the hills. Areas to the west and north-west of the Gellert and Krepostnaya mountains, in fact, a densely built-up forest park with many sanatoriums, rest houses, comfortable villas, hotels and boarding houses, places for walking and excursions. In Obuda, one-story buildings that do not meet modern requirements have disappeared.

We arrived at the final destination of the route, went slowly to unload.

- Get up, fisherman, the fish is coming!

- BUT? What? Already arrived? - Denis seems to have awakened.

Upon disembarkation, Zaza's traditional request was made for proper behavior when visiting the memorable and historical places of Budapest.

Apart from minor excesses and violations, Zaza's request was carried out almost until the last day of the tour.

The remaining days in Budapest were completely devoted to sightseeing tours of the city, which, despite the heterogeneity of Zaza's group, left almost no one indifferent and almost everyone was fascinated by the beauty of Budapest.

Even, someone from the group, hastily composed, a little song about Budapest, often picked up by many other members of the group, which sounded like this in words:

Budapest, Budapest,

If someone forgets you

Let's not give him a peshkesh!

We took a lot of pictures, exchanged impressions, gave recommendations to each other, so that evening activities and pastimes turned like a wheel around the group, involving almost everyone.

Late in the evening of the fourth day of our stay in Budapest, Zaza, seeing Alice home, thoughtfully and sadly said goodbye to her.

- Will you come? Alice looked at Zazu with a questioning sad look.

- No, late, perhaps - refrained Zaza.

- What happened to you? Alice was surprised. - I didn't come yesterday. Didn't they tell you something?

- No, what are you! Tired of something, and my head ached.

- I know the cure for this disease.

Alice rose on her tiptoes and kissed him on the lips.

- What are you doing to me? In a few days I will leave Hungary. Do you want to expand your fan list?

Alice started up, gave him a light slap in the face, and abruptly ran to the door.

Alice, wait...

All evening and all night Zaza held in dismay.

Alice suddenly burst into his soul, turning everything upside down and turning in it, and the careless words that he allowed himself tormented and tormented him.

That same evening, after a fun time, Sofiko assured her girlfriend Ketino of the benefits of free, free, European love.

- You know, Ket, - she admitted, - some approaches can be argued, but the simplicity of the relationship is very captivating.

- Which one, exactly?

- For example, the fact that a young couple in love lives together before the wedding, in the so-called civil marriage, for almost a year, and sometimes more. This makes it possible to study and test each other well.

"Yes, but wait, is it necessary to sleep with this person?" – Ketino was amazed.

"But a person must be tested in all respects. A person before sex is completely different than after it.

- But this is contrary to Christian moral principles? Ketino was outraged. - So you can change the chosen ones indefinitely!

- But why? The end comes always and in everything.

- That's it! And there can be no good end, A.S. Pushkin wrote.

- Well, well, remember, last year I gave you O. Huxley's novel. He advises us to imagine a pipe with water under strong pressure. Then punch a hole in the pipe and see which one will hit the fountain. If, however, to make not one hole, but, say, twenty, then two dozen weak streams will come out. It's the same with emotions.

- But this is a departure from Christianity!

- I do not quite agree with this, but there is some truth in this, as in everything.

“There is no truth in wrong thinking,” Ketino stood her ground.

- The reflex of obedience to the ban is not formed in people, - Sofiko defended herself.

- Fear of the Lord leads us to obedience and humility, it is the beginning of wisdom and goodness.

- Yes, but what if a person is not a believer?

- Temptations lead to the same remorse. Diseases begin, not only bodily, but also mental, fencing off from people, poverty.

- Huxley also writes that the composition of the population is modeled on an iceberg, in which eight-tenths of its mass is under water and only one-tenth is above water.

- Here, in Europe, girls under thirty years old mostly walk and get married after thirty, so as not to burden their youth.

- And you look at the consequences of this! The birth rate has dropped sharply.

- But they are happy, happy that they live, first of all, for themselves!

- Are you serious?

- And what?

- And you like such permissiveness?

Here, condoms are sold at every turn, and it has come to the point that they are given out in all stores instead of surrender. This is nothing but incitement and pushing to sin. We have them in our pockets too.

- And you?

- Look! If you find it, take it.

- I don't want to argue anymore. Time and life will show who is right, and everything will be clear.

- And what will you do if Vano leaves you later? asked Ketino.

- Take better care of your Kitty, - Sofiko was offended.

- Everything that does not happen in accordance with the truth, sooner or later turns into evil. In addition to the physical, a person also has a spiritual, moral core, and if he is loaded with sins for a long time, then sooner or later he will not stand it, and then it is difficult to save him.

- Oh, these teachings, I'm fed up with them!

- Please, act as you know, me something, what? - disappointedly threw Ketino.

The conversation, word for word, went far and lasted for a long time, until the friends, disappointed with each other, fell into a dream.

XIX

The last, fifth day of our stay in Budapest turned out to be rich, colorful and interesting for the whole group.

In the morning, Alice led a group to explore the islands on the Danube, one of which, Margaret, was equipped with a landscaped park with hotels, baths, tennis courts, restaurants and espresso cafes.

- On the island of Csepel, friends, there is the largest industrial enterprise in Budapest, the Csepel metalworking and machine-building plant, - Alice listed. - Across the Danube, within the city, there are eight beautiful bridges, of which two are railway. Spread out on the Danube plain, Pest was for a long time a trading appendage of Buda, its role began to grow in the second half of the eighteenth century, when more and more government, cultural, educational institutions, industrial and commercial enterprises began to be located on the left bank.

Within the so-called Small Ring, most government offices are located.

We examined the majestic building of the country's parliament. We walked along the crowded shopping thoroughfares, with

attractive shop windows and many small cozy cafes. We stopped, drank coffee, Coca-Cola.

- In the city, as you can see, - Alice reported, - there are hundreds of small espressos, and in the center they are literally at every turn.

- I don't want to live in a sanzone, but I want to live in Budapest, - Shalva was deeply moved.

A wave of revival went through the group.

- Calm down, - Zaza reassured, - we will be even better with time.

- Yes, you know a lot, - Shalva mumbled under his breath.

- The main trade routes of Pest are the Great Ring, the radial Lajos Kossuth Avenue and several other streets. The two-kilometer avenue was laid and built up in the seventies and eighties of the last century for the millennial anniversary of Hungary. It ends with Heroes' Square, with the majestic buildings of the Museum of Fine Arts. Central Exhibition Hall and complexes of monuments to the Millennium of Hungary. We're on our way there now," Alice looked at her watch.

- Denis lives on Heroes Square! Shalva suddenly exclaimed.

- Cudgel, also not in Budapest, but in Tbilisi, - Boris pushed him.

Sergey wrote something in a notebook, Shalva teased him, even asked Denis whether to push him in the neck?

- Yes, leave him alone, - Denis removed the threat from Sergey, - you don't see, the man is collecting material for his future book.

- Don't tell me? Boris was surprised. Okay, let him write, and then we will read it and, if we don't like something, we will give it to him.

Where can we get his book?

- Do not be afraid guys, the situation is under control, I control everything, - Denis assured.

"Yes, you don't control a damn thing, but you yourself will be its publisher, you'll see," Shalva chuckled.

- Calmly! Boris raised his hand.

- Yes, it happened once, and here is the result! Shalva noted.

Sanzona - one of the districts of Tbilisi

- Do you regret it?

- Yes ... - Shalva thought about it and immediately caught himself.

- Well, that's all, now shut up and let us listen. And Sergey is the same writer as I am the Chinese emperor.

As promised, Alice left the bus at Heroes Square.

We examined the ensemble of exact copies of some famous

There are monuments of Hungarian architecture, behind the square a favorite place for recreation and entertainment of the townspeople is the city park, with the adjoining zoo, circus and famous attractions - the Merry Park.

Alice spoke about the construction of the subway using the rich experience of Soviet builders and using the Mytishchi plant. Among the means of urban transport, in addition to traditional ones, Alice noted one of the few rack railways in Europe to Mount Széchenyi, a cable car to the top of Janos, at an elevation of five hundred and ninety-two meters above sea level, and one of the longest railways in the world, stretching for fourteen kilometers along the most picturesque places of the Buda Mountains. She mentioned the many hot springs within the city.

- Already the Romans, and later the Turks, arranged baths at the springs. Now, over a dozen baths and hydropathic establishments with indoor and outdoor pools have been built near hot water outlets.

- I want to go to the bathhouse, - exclaimed Shalva.

- The bath will be in the sanzone for you, - Boris reassured him.

"Budapests also love them very much," Alice continued, as if answering Shalva's exclamation.

The day ended with a spring farewell banquet for the whole group in a luxurious restaurant not far from the hotel.

Without waiting for the end of the feast, Alice dragged Zazu with her, giving the group complete freedom.

She took Zazau to Mount Gellert, then to the fishermen's bastion from where they admired the evening panorama of the city, the lights of advertisements, the endless chain of illuminated elegant storefronts, illuminated bridges, strings, residents of the capital and tourists walking along them and along the streets filling the open terraces of restaurants and espressos ... We took a boat trip along the Danube.

"Are you going to refuse to come in even for a little while today?" Alice asked as they approached her house.

- Alice, it's late, when will I get back to the hotel? Zaza hesitated.

- Well, at least not for long. Are you not interested in how I live?

- No, what are you very even ... - Zaza's tongue stuttered.

- Well, let's go then, - Alice dragged Zazu almost by force.

"What would they do without me, Alice?"

- Yes, they are probably already drunk and sleeping. I am responsible for this night!

- Oh! - drawled Zaza, - how warm, sweet and wonderful it is here! How cozy and comfortable.

- Truth? - Alice rejoiced, introducing the guest to her temporary housing.

They sat down at the table in the living room.

- Oh! Zaza exclaimed. - Is this the bottle of Champagne that we took on the ship and did not have time to drink?!

The conversation lasted about twenty minutes, to the light and pleasant Hungarian melody from Alice's tape recorder.

Alice went out to smoke on the balcony, leaned on the railing, looked down, then up. Zaza approached with a soft, inaudible step.

"Today is a moonlit night," Alice muttered absentmindedly.

While she was smoking, an elongated transparent cirrus cloud floated under the moon.

- So, without a cloud, she is much more beautiful ...

- Yes, - agreed with her Zaza.

- Dark spots, like continents, against the background of a bright, light disk.

- Zaza, quickly answer me, is the moon a sphere or a round flat disk?

- What happened to you? Zaza was surprised. Who do you take me for?

Alice couldn't help laughing.

- By the way, astronomy is taught not only here, in Budapest, but also in Tbilisi.

- Yes? And I thought, stupid ... And why does the breeze drive the clouds under the moon, but does not touch it itself?

- So that we can admire her!

Alice laughed again.

- I love your laugh!

- What about me?

- You too...

He looked at her for a while, confused, then leaned towards her, ran his lips along the entire perimeter of her lips. Then he squeezed her little head with his hands and pressed it to him, as if trying to absorb it into his heart.

- What are you doing to me, Alice?

She trembled in his arms like a reed in the wind, and he lifted her into his arms.

“Don't you know that dissolving passions means losing all control over yourself, and this, as they say, this, this,” she stammered her tongue, “and this is up to the first lamppost.

Zaza no longer listened to her, but acted mechanically.

- What have we done to you? - Zaza exclaimed in fright after a while.

You tore all my clothes off!

- Yah! We didn't even have time to uncork the champagne!

Soon, sitting on the edge of the bed, they were clinking glasses of champagne and eating chocolate chips.

- For the coincidence of feelings and actions, - Alice clinked her glass, - But don't worry, it doesn't oblige you to anything. The beauty of Budapest is to blame for everything.

- I'll go and admire him, - Zaza got up

- Well! Goodbye kiss?!

- Not! Not! Not yet!

Alice walked over to the piano and ran over the keys.

- Where did you study? You play amazing!

"At a music college," Alice said without interrupting the Moonlight Sonata. She played her favorite thing and sadly realized that she was playing it only for him and would never play it for anyone else, the Budapest Moonlight Sonata.

Alice remembered what she had read about a certain chick who left his native places and nest and went to distant lands to look for what he dreamed of all the time, his beloved. And when he found her, he sang for the only time in his life and sang without seeing anything around, which is why he ran into thorns, and in his death agony he sang even more beautifully, and everything around him froze, listening to him.

"Our whole life passes in anticipation of something extraordinary," Alice seems to pick up his thoughts, "it imperceptibly comes and goes from a person, remaining nearby for only a moment, we usually find out when it came, looking back at many years ago.

- It's a pity that I won't have a child...

- Who knows! Can everything work out?

- Tolstoy everything will be formed! Alice smiled. - Okay, it doesn't matter, the main thing is that you exist.

- Have you read and know Tolstoy? Zaza pressed Alice's nose with his index finger.

- If astronomy is taught in Tbilisi, then literature and all the famous classics are taught in Budapest.

- You know, it seems to me that Hungarians and Georgians are very similar.

- How? Temperament, character, musicality...

- And more, and more?

Zaza thought for a moment, but immediately found:

- Willingness to love always and everywhere!

The moonlit night of Budapest turned out to be significant not only for Zaza and Alice, but for almost the entire tourist group.

After a solemn fashionable general celebration, a farewell evening, many spent their time in bars, restaurants, as well as in their rooms in a luxurious metropolitan hotel, according to the principle "their own communicate with their own".

It was not without difficulty that Sergei managed to break away from his friends from a protracted feast and, before going to bed, still find the strength to write to Yulia.

"I'm sorry to bother you at such a late hour, I barely broke away from my friends. Haven't heard from you in a long time. I'm worried if I offended you in any way.

Perhaps my fault is that I want to appear before you not only from the best side, but also as it really is, although it is difficult to find at least one person who would know himself entirely. I would be able to, or at least try to improve, if you would point me in the direction in which I should do it.

Well, if you want, be angry with me, scold me, but just don't be silent, please.

I would like to discuss a lot with you, about many things talk, but let my nonsense pass by your ears and do not pay attention to them.

There is a lot of selectivity in life, I think even from the last fool you can take something socially and even learn something from him.

I'm very interested in how you're doing with your dissertation, how things are at work. I understand that you may have a lot of problems, including with time, but please find it at least a little for me.

I have a feeling of anxiety, like a person who knows the time of his end. I simply disappear in search of my berth, my quiet haven in the desired and long-awaited harbor, far from the future of passions and events in the ocean of life. But I am looking for my point of application not in order, like Archimedes, to inform the world about my intentions and capabilities, but only in order to at least partially realize myself, my inner world, to awaken the energy and potentialities that have frozen in me in anticipation of a meeting with that one person, a close friend, with whom one could share the deepest and most intimate.

Only in this I see salvation and hope not only for myself, but also for this close soul.

Can't disappear without a trace...

Sergey, having not completed the next letter, tired, plunged into a deep sleep. Waking up, he heard the cheerful voices of those who accompanied Denis to their room, his violent refusals to put him to bed.

- What am I to you, girl, or what? Don't you dare undress me, go to your girlfriends!

After the skirmish, there was a lull, accompanied by dreams.

By midnight, the cheerful, familiar voices of the group members were heard again.

"Well, they won't calm down in any way!" - thought through a dream.

It was already quite late that the silence was pierced by the heart-rending, heart-rending roar of the engine of one of the cars in the parking lot in front of the hotel, which was replaced by Hungarian speech.

The roar of the engine continued with variable power for so long that Sergei tried several times to get up. Soon, the sound of breaking glass was heard, men's screams and abuse, apparently, even swearing in Hungarian. The noise continued, but Sergei could not overcome his drowsiness and slept until the morning.

In the early morning of the next day, he was surprised by the absence of Denis in the room and the suspicious silence that seemed to him.

"It's not like they left and left me, or they just forgot me," a disturbing thought flashed through his mind. Rushing to the balcony in the hope of finding their bus in front of the hotel, he was alarmed to see only two police cars in the parking lot.

He quickly put on his clothes and, without even washing himself, ran out in search of his group. Several nearby familiar numbers, including the number of Shalva and Boris, were tightly locked. Part of the group, fortunately for themselves, was found in the room of Guide Zaza, where the nightly event, which he did not know until the end, was discussed with excitement. There was also a police officer in the room.

- What's going on here, Shalva? Sergei whispered.

- Aba mera vici. - At night, it turns out, late at night, someone threw bottles from the window of the hotel. Two cars were damaged, and now they are sewing them for us.

- Didn't make ours, right? Sergei asked hopefully.

- I didn't do it with Boris exactly, - Shalva confirmed, - I hope you and Denis too, but I can't vouch for others.

- If you don't get stuck!

- So everything went smoothly and sweetly, and here you are!

- All of us, except for some, including you, were raised at night!

Why didn't they wake me up?

- Zaza ordered not to touch, said that you are not capable of this.

- Well, well, thanks to him, but this does not change the general case! Where are our rest?

- Together with Alice in the hotel lobby, there are police, car owners, showdowns

...

The unpleasant rigmarole-trial lasted for a long time. The police insisted that Zaza and Alice go with her along with the car owners. Zaza's insistence and assurances did not have the slightest effect. The situation was aggravated by the fact that Zaza let slip about his absence at the hotel at night.

1. Aba mera vizi - (load.) How do I know.

- How do you vouch for your own in this case, - the police officer pressed him.

- All the guys, we all Khan! - Doomedly turned to the group of its guide, whose speech reminded Sergei of the call of the king of the Spartans Leonidas to the surviving small detachment of soldiers.

- Spartans! You and I cannot hold Thermopylae, so let's try to kill King Xerxes.

What happened next was vague.

- Well, guys, - meanwhile Zaza continued, embarrassed by the night incident, but encouraged by Alice and gathered his strength, - apparently it will not be possible to save the honor of our group, so let's try to eliminate the subject of our dispute with the accusers, who demand monetary compensation for allegedly inflicted by them us material damage.

There were some small objections and disagreements:

- It's not us ... We have something to do with it! What, besides us, no one lives in the hotel? Why did they take on

US? - Calm, calm, I beg you, - Zaza called out, stretching his hand forward in the pose of a leader.

- During the trip, we are all connected by one chain, which I have repeatedly told you about. If at least one of the group is even briefly detained by the police, Not to mention the whole group, we will not be able to leave Budapest at least on time.

- Wait and shut up! Boris cut him off.

"I'll tell you another secret," Zaza continued, "according to the trip schedule, we were not supposed to stay in Budapest for so many days, but as a guide, Alice asked the authorities and they allowed us, and for the maximum period, cutting off from excursions to other cities. Now I think that we did it in vain, but that's not the point, but that sooner or later you have to pay for pleasure.

Yes, but we paid!

- Well, well, I'll tell you briefly and more clearly. We have two options: either we stay in Budapest for an indefinite period of time to investigate what happened, which may shed light on many more nightly incidents of none of us, - Zaza meant primarily himself and Alice, - which I think, not many of you will agree. Or we collect the amount to compensate for the damage caused and in a few minutes we take our feet. I think it's not worth finally overshadowing five

wonderful days in Budapest, which, I think, will remain in the memory of each of us for life.

- I wonder why we have to pay for others with our hard-earned money? - mainly the female part of the group was indignant.

- So what, will the innocent Alice pay? Zaza exclaimed, noticing how she shakes all her money out of her purse onto the table.

Movement swept through the group, and after Alice laid out all the available Hungarian money and Zaza from the wallet. There was a whisper, negotiations began, the first to support the guides were Kako and Leah. They were followed by the four, with difficulty snatching, though from the hands of Shalva a small bill, like a dried roach from the hands of Vitsin in the movie "The Twelve Chairs".

The gentlemanly act of the four was picked up by Dito and Nino, followed by Vano and Kote, and little by little the whole group replenished the gathering.

Soon Alice handed it over in the hotel lobby to the affected owners in the presence of police officers, for which she received a receipt.

The victims, however, considered the amount insufficient. I had to collect the second round, after which, after all, Alice persuaded the dissatisfied owners not to pester foreign tourists, to take into account that they were guests of their city. The negotiations ended, and the confrontational parties parted ways, in general, with the world.

Soon the group breathed freely, although they experienced depression and moral and physical fatigue, drove away from the hotel and passed the main and secondary streets of Budapest, taxied to the main intercity motorway Budapest - Eger.

"So the Swedes fled from Poltava," Shalva hummed under his breath.

On the track, Sandor turned on the tape recorder and inserted one of his cassettes.

The bus, having gained the optimal speed for itself, was already racing along the main route - Budapest - Miskolc. Flocks of crows fluttered and croaked on its sides.

- What do they want from us? - upset Shalva.

- You don't know, do you? Boris explained. - They ask for payment in kind.

- Love Eli! I don't like them. Let them wind it up better, otherwise I'll swear.

- Who loves them? Denis was surprised.

- The one that is silent, probably, - Shalva hinted at Sergey, who pecked awake and tried to recreate the sounds and voices that he heard last terrible night, and sort of figured out the perpetrators of the event, but considered that it makes no sense to name their names now and disgrace, and even more so cause new altercations and disassemblies, although he was ninety percent sure of his guesses.

The bus raced along the Budapest-Miikolc highway, flocks of crows were still seeing off their guests from Budapest, and the legendary music of L.V. Beethoven - Moonlight Sonata.

"No, it's really a delusion" - Zaza recreated the picture of last night, perhaps the best in the past, and possibly in the future life.

"May the great composer forgive me, but the Moonlight Sonata from now on will become the Budapest Moonlight Sonata for me," he followed with his eyes a tear that escaped from his eye and shimmered with brilliance on Alice's cheek. Above her fluttered a bright flower from a new scarf.

Zaza hugged Alice and gently shook her around.

No, they'll see...

But we managed to notice.

- Don't worry, Alice, and everything is fine, and we will collect something else.

- No, no, friends, it's not about money at all, - Alice hastened to justify herself, - I'm just embarrassed about what happened.

Zaza did not understand what incident she meant,

Or rather understood.

Waves of music enveloped the salon, burst out of it, and it seemed that the engine itself rushes up after it.

- Press, Sandor, - Zaza encouraged the driver.

XX

Young female hands were rhythmically wiping the window frame with a damp cloth. Such wet cleaning was recommended, especially to citizens, several years ago, after the damage to the number one object that shook the whole of Europe, but has not lost its relevance on the principle of caution.

"How everything in life is interconnected and interdependent!"

The fateful threads connecting with each other everything living and non-living in the world are so thin and ghostly that even one rough touch can break them.

- Someone else's misfortune does not happen, granddaughter, - as if guessing her thoughts, the grandmother said, completely absorbed in knitting. She had to do this before, but now, in this period of her life, she felt with particular force the connection between the work of the hands and the work of the soul.

"Sometimes the same phenomenon or event appears with different facets and shades, exciting and awakening new receptors of attitudes," she was amazed at her discovery.

“Unfortunately, accidents, including global ones, are satellites of civilization,” she reminded her granddaughter.

- Meow, - the cute kitten reminded of himself.

“Yes, yes, Maksimka, forgive me, I missed the words about affection and love, but I didn’t forget about them,” the granddaughter confessed.

“Everything in life has a result,” grandmother interrupted, “it harmonizes everything visible and invisible, but we don’t notice it,” she pointed out with a glance at the large icon of the Savior on the wall. – He rules over all the outgoing and permanent worlds, including the higher ones, if they exist, as some current psychics like to say. He is our alpha and omega and ... everything that exists around us, everything and everything belongs to him. He created man in such a way that he cannot exist without a constant connection with his creator, otherwise he dies. That is why it is important to constantly, at least once a week, attend church, a haven for the modern, tormented world, so that a person is not overcome by enemies and sins.

I am happy, daughter, that you listen to me and do not let this pass your ears, as your mother does.

- She can be understood, she is a child of her atheistic time, - the daughter hurried with excuses.

- Aren't you born at the same time? No, granddaughter, these are my mistakes and omissions, although I tried my best to prevent this. Scripture says that no one will come to the Father unless his Son wills it.

- Yes, but her generation also lived with high ideals, and, I must say, they achieved a lot, - the granddaughter objected.

- What is the point if you gain all earthly goods, but lose your soul?

- Isn't service to relatives, friends and neighbors, family, work, country - this is also service to him?

- Blind, blind service! After all, parents need from their children not blind and cold-blooded, dead help, but above all love. And what kind of love can we talk about when there is neither faith nor recognition? Diligent and long, painstaking, even hard labor and work without faith in Him turns a person into an arrogant, arrogant in relation to others, makes him proud, even in the then understanding, smart, talented, and much more can be listed. People themselves become some kind of independent legislators of life.

What about legal and civil laws?

- But they too, if you delve deeply into them, proceed from one common law of God. And what is decent in using the laws of the one whom you reject and do not recognize?

- Yes, but, probably, modern sciences and knowledge cannot be rejected either.

- They are not rejected. Modern true science is closely connected with and follows from the said general law.

In relation to eternity, all earthly knowledge, privileges, degrees, titles, wealth are nothing!

Earthly knowledge is abolished, we need it only here, in this fleeting earthly life, where we need not our knowledge, but our love and our heart. What will it be like for you if your children grow up and become very important and knowledgeable people, but they do not know, recognize and love you?

- Grandma, I think I understand you? - the granddaughter answered, after a pause and thinking.

"If I didn't hope that you would understand me, then I wouldn't spend so much energy on persuasion now. But you have His blood and flesh in you, which you receive through the holy sacraments. You did not see Him and did not know Him in life, but you felt with your heart and soul at least once, as it happened to me and happens to many parishioners of the church. Even the great physiologist Pavlov himself noted that the human heart is the second, no less, if not more, important organ of knowledge than the brain. Having known and felt Him in oneself, it is difficult not to desire Him again and again, although the evil one often manages to lead a person away from this joy. But the son of God is difficult to take away from the almighty even to the strongest. In general, the life of a believer is like swimming against the current of the river of life, and if you stop even for a moment, it will carry him down.

- Read the classics, - the wise men advise, - and you will find the answers to all the questions that have arisen in your life, - the granddaughter remembered.

- You don't need to read everything, but only what answers the questions that have arisen in your soul. These are also the words of one of the classics, - grandmother reminded, - but believe me, granddaughter, after twelve years of constant reading of the holy fathers and men of the church, you will find in your soul the answers to all the questions that have arisen, arise and may arise, and it is quite possible that you will not need to read anything else and will not want to.

It's hard to believe, grandmother, - the granddaughter was upset, - I'm a bit of an earthly person, and I want a little earthly joys and happiness.

“I want it, of course I want it, granddaughter,” my grandmother looked over her glasses, “you are young and beautiful, just remember, everything is in moderation, and the love of this world is betrayal and rejection from Him, and ask him for earthly love in your fervent prayers, and you'll get it.

- Grandma, I understand everything you say, but at the same time, not quite everything. Not immediately, please, everything needs time and work of the mind and heart.

- Oh! - Grandma drawled, - you just said a very important thing, the work of the mind and heart, this is vital and important for knowing Him and joining him. Now come over, I'll take an intermediate size from you, and at the same time I'll do a fitting.

- Wow, beautiful, grandma!

There was a creak of an opening door and quick footsteps.

- Yulia, come and help better than to giggle and listen to grandmother's tales, - an irritated voice of the mother came in.

Yulia looked at her grandmother with widened eyes.

- And let everyone be rewarded according to his faith - says the savior. And she is still unhappy that her life did not work out, may the Lord forgive her. We must pray for her, granddaughter, and now go help her.

“As we pray, so we live,” the granddaughter agreed with her, hurrying to help her mother.

- Good girl, - grandmother threw after her, went up to the icons and prayed until her ears heard reproaches in a displeased tone from the kitchen.

Leaning heavily on a stick, she moved towards it.

- Oh, how many things I bought, daughter! What for?

- Why, mom, tomorrow is your anniversary, eighty years. Forgotten, right? I still have time to cook, so I jumped from work to the market and barely dragged it all, I'll still get a reprimand.

“Mom, I offered to go yesterday, but you didn't let me,” Yulia reminded.

Lena hastily sorted through the kitchen utensils and laid out what she had brought.

- You don't know what to buy and what not! If you can help me cook and thank you for that, I will be grateful.

- Mom, when I refused you and did not help you? Julia almost burst into tears.

“No need, Lenochka, because of me to worry and arrange such a fever,” my grandmother asked, “calmness and peace in the family are more precious than a gift,

but what I need now. I have to prepare for death, not for my birthday. Wow, eighty have already wound up, thank you, Lord, - grandmother crossed herself.

“You believe in Him, but you yourself talk about death, isn’t that a sin?” - Lena complained to her, - you yourself say that birth and death are not our business?

“The writer Zoshchenko spoke before his death that you need to die on time, but I was late and lingered in this world,” my grandmother reminded.

- All right, grandmother, - Yulia complained, - you got it from your mother, and now get it from you!

- Was waiting for me there, hubby, it's hard for him without me!

- Oh, I've been waiting, where is it! One is there, right? And parents, and all relatives! Lena reminded me.

- Nothing! How long have you waited, will wait. Don't you feel sorry for us? Yulia exclaimed passionately.

Don't get lost, I'm just a burden now.

- ABOUT! And also a believer!

- I remember one story from the holy fathers, it seems, - my grandmother became thoughtful. “Imagine that a certain person finds himself in a very beautiful summer forest. The river murmurs, the birds sing, there is a lot of shade and sun. Bright flowers are fragrant, full of delicious fruits and berries, butterflies fly, animals frolic ... And a person, puzzled by the indescribable beauty of the forest, enjoys it, fishes, catches butterflies, listens to birdsong, and for more than one day. And he is continually reminded that this is not his home, that it is time to leave, even though it is beautiful and pleasant here. He refuses, dismisses reminders, does not want to leave, wants to stay in the forest. So... The Earth is not our home, our home is there, in the sky. And whoever wants to establish himself on earth will lose heaven.

- If you still have time, we will all take off there, but for now, stay with us!

- What was she not going to knit for us, and here you are! Is something bothering you?

- All right, all right, we're talking at all! So, when is that birthday?

- Tomorrow!

- Wow, how fast time flies. Like it was yesterday, and here's a new one! That is OK! Tomorrow and today are still far from complete.

- What are you! Yulia is working tomorrow, she will come late. Going to a concert tomorrow night with friends. So that remains one tonight.

“I'll have a lot of time before evening,” Yulia promised.

- We'll see! Elena doubted.

- How, then, tomorrow we will celebrate without Yulechka? - the grandmother was alarmed. - I'm against!

- I'll be back later, grandma! At work, I was also asked about something.

- Well, of course! Lena agreed. - I'll call the neighbors - all three.

- Well, good! Grandma rejoiced.

- So, okay, I ran to work, and you, Yulia, see what you can do from the list. I'll do the rest tonight.

"Okay," Julia agreed.

- So, go, grandmother here, see what and how I will do, and at the same time we will gossip with you, now no one bothers us.

Evening in Kyiv turned out to be extremely cold.

There has been no new snow for a long time, but the previously fallen one seemed to wake up and decided to remind the townspeople about the time of the year that now rules in the capital of Ukraine.

The legs, however, warmly protected by woolen socks and lined boots, from a long wait and standing still, still gradually got cold and encouraged to move. Hands also rubbed each other, taking from time to time the exhalation of warm air from the mouth.

- Well, where is she still? - was indignant, looking at the clock, waiting. On the one hand, it's even good.

Finally, the silhouette of the expected and desired appeared in the distance.

- Finally! The concert has already begun! - I heard a reproach, muffled by a friendly kiss on the cheek.

- Where is Sveta? Is she not coming?

- No, she said she had a cold!

- That's how she always, at the most crucial moment, something happens!

"And I'm much better off without her!"

- Did you get the tickets?

- No, Julia, tickets have long been sold out, today the concert is full house.

- Well, why, let's go to the entrance, I'll organize something.

- Don't, Igor, we'd better go somewhere, - suggested Yulia.

"Let's go, let's go," he urged her along.

- Wait! Where are you taking me? Julia laughed, unable to fight back.

He himself, having paid the women at the entrance, could hardly contain his joy.

"Go upstairs, it's easier to find a place there," the controller shouted after them.

The concert of the symphony orchestra was already in full swing. Soon, in the semi-darkness, by touch, Igor and Yulia managed to somehow settle down.

- And you were worried about Svetka! Well, where would we put her?

- On your knees, or better on your head!

- Shh! - Julia pressed her finger to her lips, joining the atmosphere of the concert.

To the right of the conductor, who gracefully waved his baton and famously carried along a huge orchestra, there were almost ten double basses, as if leading listeners along a spring alley. To the left was a whole army of violinists, as if picking up, circling and bewitching the fallen yellow autumn leaves. And the pipes in the center supported them. Two harps, leading and driven, like sailboats on the sea, by two women evoked a soft sadness. Above the stage hung a huge canvas with the inscription "Winter Kyiv - 90", a festival of symphonic music.

Yulia listened to such atonic symphonic music for the first time and was amazed by it. Individual works by various composers were performed. A large black piano was suddenly rolled into the foreground.

- Black on two legs is a black man, - Igor whispered in Yulia's ear, - and black on three legs is a piano. Do you remember?

- Yes! Leave me alone, - Julia pushed Igor away from her, laughing.

The pianist took the stage.

- Perhaps, Alfred Hitchcock is right, arguing that the duration of the film, and I would add, of the concert, is directly related to the endurance of the human bladder, - Igor said, - let's go!

- Igor, well, not so frankly! Yulia was outraged.

- Do you know the laws of music according to Oscar Wilde? So, he claims that music is a big problem and that when good music is played, no one listens, and if bad music is played, no one talks.

- Well, why are you like this, Igor, - Yulia was more and more surprised.

After the intermission, several melodic compositions were performed by a trio - piano, violin and double bass.

Igor moved closer and closer to Yulia and whispered vulgarities in her ear.

- Music and books are like a big pond, the deeper they are, the more water they contain. To compose music like

Robert Schumann once confided, you just need to remember some melody that no one else has thought of.

- Let me finally listen! Why did you bring me here? They are virtuosos!

- Oh, this is a difficult philosophical question, - Igor chuckled in response.

– Virtuosos, according to Marian Kozine, are abnormal people who spend six to eight hours a day sawing the violin or pounding the keys and only once a year perform in front of a small audience. The fate of the virtuosos is sad, but there is no need to complain about the lack of replenishment of their ranks with new personnel.

A neighbor in the row made a remark to Igor. Julia picked it up.

- Fu-u, - Igor drawled. - Fine, fine! So be it, I'll shut up. Indeed, they say that music unites everyone except neighbors.

The soloist - the violinist with the orchestra again appeared on the stage enchanted and captivated everyone. The thin graceful hand seemed to merge into a single whole with the bow, lovingly led along the strings. Gentle ringing awakened and called for concentration. Music smoothly entered the souls, stirring up memory and burning feelings.

The applause seemed to have no end.

Chandeliers and sconces gradually darkened. It was already possible to distinguish the noise of steps and the rustle of fans.

They started to disperse.

The audience consisted exclusively of youths and elders.

The streams from the ranks dissipated, but the clapping still continued.

The white-gold hall was left reluctantly.

The cold outside, after the warmth and charm, seemed harsher and more palpable.

More and more people came to the transport stops, and Igor and Yulia decided to walk a little. The frost was getting stronger, and Yulia did not so sharply move away from Igor's warming touches.

- Do you want me to give you a jacket?

- what- you And so I have so many things!

- I'm ready to follow you all my life, - Igor muttered, tightly pressing Yulia's arm.

- Stop it, please! Julia asked.

- One fool claims that a man loves a woman as much as he can, a woman loves a man as much as she wants. Therefore, a man usually loves one woman more than she is worth it, and a woman wants to love a man more than she can.

- But after all and love case different. A certain historian believes that a man usually loves women he respects, and a woman respects only those men she loves, and therefore a man often loves women who are not worth loving, and a woman often respects men who are not worth respecting.

"He's right about that," Julia laughed.

- Don't you love me? Igor asked.

- Y-s! Yulia shook her head.

- And do not respect?

- Y-s!

- Not at all, not a little?

- Y-s!

"I see," Igor drawled resentfully, pulling his hand away from her elbow.

Now he, pretending to be offended, trailed behind Yulia.

- Stop, please! Well, what are you, really? Julia turned around and pulled him by the sleeve. "You know very well how well I treat you. We're not bad, good friends. Well, isn't that enough for you?"

- Few! – rapped out Igor, stopping. - Well, okay, let's go! Coldly.

They bet right up to Yulia's house, to which they drove up in a taxi.

"Svetka, the parasite, didn't come on purpose, she deliberately arranged it. Otherwise, these conversations would not have happened, thought Yulia.

- Not today, then tomorrow, but this conversation would still take place between us. And do not hold a grudge against Svetka, - as if Igor read her thoughts.

- Don't misunderstand me. We are far from being children. I am already twenty-eight, you will soon be twenty-six, - Igor explained, trying to press Yulia against the wall of the house. Neither you nor I will be left alone. But I do not want us to regret in the future that we missed each other and our common happiness.

- Please, don't!

- I love you and no one will give up, especially for your new black and white friend.

- How dare you? Julia exploded, pulling away.

"Svetka, the parasite, told him everything."

- Julia, wait a minute, - Igor regretted his carelessness, from which a hail of words and confessions poured out. He caught up with Yulia, tried to hug and kiss her.

"Don't you dare order who I love and who I don't," she escaped with a light slap in the face and, breaking out of her embrace, ran to the stairs.

"I'll kill him if he touches you, just know it," he called after her.

Julia hid her feelings from her family, citing cold and fatigue. Under a warm shower in the bathroom, she mentally replayed the whole conversation, tried to compare Igor's feelings with her own, wondering and wondering about their correctness, reasonableness and expediency. She was surprised at the oddities of love, was torn by a sensible, cold mind to believe that, at the call of her soul and heart, she had abandoned her fellow countryman who was nearby and was ready to

give her heart to a stranger whom she had recently met, she had been together for a very short time and, despite the upcoming short meeting, would be doomed to a long if not eternal separation. Will she be able to go with him to his distant sunny homeland? Or will he leave everything there and move to live here? Everything seemed problematic, and the heart, in anticipation, burned and burned.

“No, this is really madness, madness that doesn’t look like you at all, Yulia.”

Soon she was counting the days on the calendar, after which this meeting would take place, fleeting, fleeting, as she saw it.

“Let it be, as it will be, and then we’ll see,” she discarded annoying thoughts, “is this really the power of the first desired kiss in the life of every girl who has not yet been kissed?”

A kiss that permeates a person, uniting the physical and spiritual principles in him, accompanies his whole life with a relentless step, removes him from others and focuses on one thing. Which treacherously breaks into the inner nature, unceremoniously and without asking turns everything inside. Pulling paper and pen closer to her, Yulia ventured to write the first word of the letter to

Sergei. Excitement and outbursts of feelings prevented her from doing this for a long time. It was a little comforting to know that her letters would never be read by the addressee, would help her to pour out her doubts and hesitations that overwhelmed her.

“My friend, dear, dear Sergei,” lay down on paper. I can’t resist a few lines. Our meeting filled my heart so much that now no one can fit in it. Is that the poems of Pushkin.

My voice is for you and gentle and languid
The late silence of the dark night disturbs.
Near my bed is a sad candle
Burning, my poems, merging and murmuring,
Flow, streams of love, flow, full of you.
In the darkness your eyes shine before me,
They smile at me, and I hear sounds:
My friend, my gentle friend... love... yours... yours...

Do not sing, beauty is with me
You are the sad songs of Georgia.
They remind me
Another life and a distant shore.

The guy who has been caring for me for several years somehow does not have a soul, and one of our chance meetings turned everything upside down in my life. How changeable is fate! Weird. It seems to be a trifle and everything changes. Like Tolstoy written: a little bit in one direction, a little bit in the other, and, please, completely different. What stories life throws up! Not a single writer would come up with. I'm so afraid of our relationship. The sages advise not to desire, for all troubles come from desires. And Tyutchev inspired, it is not given to us to predict how our word will resonate. Yes, I recently read somewhere that the paths of all the unlucky ones converge, and therefore the lucky ones too. Are you lucky, Sergey? Funny. Now, quite by accident, I repeated the question of Napoleon, which he asked all the officers and major military men whom he took into his army. Based on your answer, I will try to calculate myself. In general, they say that when you want to achieve something, you need to find someone who is interested in this, but this formula does not seem to be suitable in our case. Bufleur believed that love is a loss of reason, but after all ... Well, okay, about wise people, I'd better remember something from poetry. You know, Seryoga,

Recently I bought a cool two-volume. You will come, I will read to you from it. And now, almost about you and me:

We got along a little - we got to know each other,

Your words sunk into my soul,

But, alas, I can't hear them,

Do not hear the sounds of my relatives.

Words can't help.

And here is Mirra Lokhvitskaya:

Your soul is an oriental mystery

In it is a world of miracles, in it is a fairy tale, but not a lie.

Well, and quite at the end: come quickly, I miss you, I'm a little worried and I'm afraid of love. I do not want to think about the unwanted, my soul is filled with hope and faith. I believe her. Even if you leave, and I will stay here forever, I will not be lonely, because your trace will forever remain in my life. You see what you have done, Seryozhka, now beware of me.

XXI

On the way to Eger, the bus stopped several times for ten to fifteen minutes and moved on again.

Sandor's passengers slept almost to the very approaches to the hero-city, the administrative center of Heves county, Eger.

The first passenger to wake up was Zaza. He quickly cleaned himself up and looked around at his sleeping crew.

"We are all good when we sleep. But you can't sleep all the time."

Worries came running, a sense of responsibility made itself felt. "It would be great if they showed at least obedience," he thought of each of the group.

Alice soon woke up too.

Zaza asked Shandor to turn up the sound of the radio. In the cabin, little by little, they began to move, to fuss.

- Or maybe you shouldn't wake them up, let them sleep? Alice suggested.

- So that they roam again at night? - Zaza categorically objected and shouted:

- Climb!

Shalva watched in a dream the case that happened to him in the construction team during the third working semester, when they were completing the construction of a swimming and entertainment complex on the banks of the Kura embankment in Tbilisi.

- Chichikiya, stop throwing vegetable rot! - he barked at his classmate, originally from Kutaisi.

Chichikiya threw rotten, withered, faded carrots and beets from balcony to balcony, they hit the back of Shalva's bed, and he became furious, furious, scolded, but was too lazy to get up and answer in the same way. Chichikiya did not let up and now he used dry crusts of bread.

- How many times do I have to tell you that it is a sin to throw bread, - Shalva finally lost his temper, - now I will get up and show you how to throw people's goods!

The threat, however, was not brought into action, instead of which Shalva darted headlong under the covers and so began to wait for the enemy to run out of ammunition.

The shells, however, continued to fly in his direction, fall, crumble, crumble, and here Sergey himself could not stand it. He picked up an unfinished bottle of lemonade from the table, crept up to the balcony partition, hid there on his haunches and quietly began to wait for Chichikia. He did not hesitate once again to launch something in the order of the already shelled Pintchet.

"Damn it, I don't understand where I am, in a student dormitory room or in the presidential palace of La Moneda," Shalva barked indignantly, not at all moderating the ardor of the enemy, who, however, received unexpected retribution: Sergey in

the blink of an eye let a plentiful bottle of a shot of lemonade. Chichikia was dumbfounded, cried out in surprise, and instead of quickly slipping away, he became confused and began to dust himself off, while Sergei calmly continued his work.

- Poured, doused! Shalva triumphed. - Serves you right! You will know how to throw good things, food.

Chichikiya, in shock, saw someone's hand with a bottle of lemonade sticking out from behind the partition, and could not understand whose it was.

In the morning, when the entire construction team gathered for work, Shalva continued to sleep as if nothing had happened, and no one dared to push him aside. Suddenly a kick opened

The door was wide open, and Chichikiya immediately doused him with cold water from a basin.

- That's how to pour, and not like you, cowardly and treacherously! He reminded me of yesterday's valor. - Now get up!

Shalva jumped up in horror and, immediately orienting himself, rushed at the offender with his fists. A commotion arose, the friends were separated with difficulty, they sought their reconciliation for several days, and having achieved, they celebrated this event in the restaurant of the Iveria Hotel.

And now Shalva, feeling something awake, roared deafeningly.

- Chichikia, stop it!

- This is not Chichikia, but Boris, - peals of laughter were heard above his head: Jets of water flowed from his face behind the collar and soaked through his shirt.

- What am I, a flower bed, or what? Why are you watering me?

- So what to do? We'll wake you up for an hour, we won't wake you up!

Almost the whole group ran to the noise. Zaza and Alice barely managed to calm down, and then they lifted them up, pushed them into the bus and seated the dumbfounded Shalva on the bench.

- Calm down, friends. Calmly! The incident is completely settled, - Alice reassured the members of the group in broken Russian. - We are approaching the city of Eger at the southern foot of Mount Bükki! They produce wonderful furniture and auto parts. In addition, it is a resort and a center of winemaking. It is also famous for its historical, architectural and cultural monuments. In the center of the city, on a high hill, there are the ruins of a powerful fortress with a Romanesque basilica of the XII century. There are many charming haunts in the city, whole rows of wine cellars and cellars stretch. The largest of them are truly an underground city, with elegant halls

for visitors and many kilometers of underground galleries, - Alice clearly drew attention to herself.

- But we do not believe in it! Dato, finally awakened and cheered up, suddenly shouted from the depths of the bus, followed by Giya.

A light chuckle ran through the bus.

- Soon you will see for yourself in my words, - Alice promised and asked Shandor to stop the bus at one of the nearby cellars.

The whole group willingly poured out of the bus and soon became a welcome guest of the underground drinking establishment. They tasted red wine from a barrel, apparently intended for especially dear guests. The owner strained it into a special vessel, and from it poured it in a thin but strong stream into tall glasses, previously distributed to the guests of the cellar.

Zaza and Alice were the first to clink glasses, their glances as if to say:

- For you! For you! For us!

They were enthusiastically supported by the whole group. Then they tasted from other barrels, from different grape varieties and harvests of different years.

- Perhaps, their wines are in no way inferior to ours, aren't they, guys? Zaza turned to the group in surprise.

"They have good wines, Zaza, but it would be nice to have something to eat," Dato suggested.

Alice entered into negotiations with the owner, called somewhere and resumed the conversation.

- It's all right, Zaza, I've settled everything, the owner agreed to seat us at the tables with a snack, and then our company will transfer the payment to him.

- Alice, you're just a godsend, thank you!

- The appetizer will not be luxurious, but plentiful enough.

What are you talking about, don't look a gift horse in the mouth!

- Hooray! Hooray! the group rejoiced.

- Long live the poor!

- Long live Hungary and all the great hospitable and hospitable Hungarian people!

- We will never forget you and in turn invite all of you to our sunny and no less hospitable Georgia!

The applause was followed by Hungarian national music.

- Hooray, guys, let's go!

Soon the group raised the first post for Hungary and its hospitable and hospitable people, then for the owners of the cellar, so that the feast lasted more than an hour and a half.

- Why, Alice, are you wasting money on us? Zaza reproached Alice.

- Nothing, do not worry, I explained what happened to us, and the authorities of our tourist service were sympathetic.

- Thank you, Alice, I don't even know when and how to thank you! Zaza was confused.

- When I come to Tbilisi! Alice took a sip from her glass.

- Catch you up on that! - Zaza happily picked it up.

Soon Zaza, noticing that some of the group was clearly overdoing it, took the most energetic measures, raising everyone from the tables.

The group, in high spirits, seemed to have forgotten about the night and morning incident, and on the way to the hotel, where they were to spend one night, they sang several Georgian and Hungarian folk songs.

- Here's a guide, I understand! Here is the teacher! – admired Zaza, listening to Alice sing along to the group.

Until the evening we rested at the hotel, they offered to spend the evening, as they wish. They fled taking into account their cultural and emotional interests.

The four managed to kidnap Leah's husband to play preference, although Kako denied:

- Guys, do not hope, I have no money left at all, my wife nationalized, - he joked.

- Do we, Konopaty, have something to bet on? – inquired Shalva.

Boris thought about it, but immediately found a way out:

- We'll put on rubber bands, which we were given as change. Here's how many we've got!

Stayed for a long time.

The preference was also started in Dito and Nino's room, where Kote and Ketino came and Leah, who had missed her husband for a while.

Ketino, embarrassed by the free behavior of her friend, Sofiko, who is now secluded in a room with Vano, somewhat moved away from Kote, but did not break off, keeping him at a distance to his displeasure and even indignation.

Mzia found refuge from Dato and Gia's drunken friends at Rusiko and Manana, although later the friends broke into their room.

Zaza and Alice went out for a walk in the evening Eger.

“We are the very people who gladly kill time, which is always so lacking,” Dito reminded E. Fromm's words to those sitting at a small sweet table.

Those gathered drank tea and coffee, ate something that was still in the trunk, were not inclined to discuss.

- Excuse me, Dmitry, but on tours you don't always want to do serious things.

- Eh, no, my friend, - Dito objected, - this is just self-deception and excuses, a useful thing, if you want the opportunity, of course, you can do it anytime and anywhere. Communication and enrichment with useful conversation is far from the worst. It is not for nothing that it is said: a word or advice can save a person.

- Well, it probably depends on who the word comes from, - Leah intervened, - and what it is like!

- It is also very important to remember each other, - Sergei joined the conversation, - when you begin to understand, you immediately begin to love.

- Exactly! Philosophy, wisdom, teaches us not to judge, but to understand, therefore, to love, Dito confirmed his thought.

- Marxist-Leninist, which we were taught? Nino, Dmitry's sister, already objected.

“Yes, including her, because she instills and develops in a person not only the ability, but most importantly, the desire to think, which sooner or later will lead to the desired result,” Dito explained to her. - The famous philosopher Losev also notes that the most difficult thing is to think.

- A philosopher is an intellectually and morally developed person, - Nino supported her brother, - in ancient times they said that a wise man does not need a law, he has a mind.

- Oh, how dangerous this formula is for people who are arrogant to lawlessness! Leah exclaimed.

- And in the Middle Ages, the following consideration was recorded:

“Love God and do what you want,” Ketino exclaimed passionately.

- Yes, but, friends, if we return to thief about philosophy, then you have to somehow come to it, - Dito shook his head. “Mamardashvili is writing,” Dito read from his notebook:

“There is some path to philosophy that runs through our own trials, thanks to which we gain irreplaceable, unique experience. And it cannot be understood with the help of deduction, from the available words, but can only be experienced or, if you like, go through some kind of path of suffering.

- And, nevertheless, as he himself notes, now the most urgent problem in philosophy, psychology, science, yes, by the way, everywhere, is the problem of survival.

- Oh, - Sergey drawled, - suffering in our life is exactly what we have more than enough.

- No, Sergey, wait, my friend! It's not about what you think, - stopped Sergei Dito.

"How does he know what kind of suffering I'm thinking about," Sergei asked himself, "did my bastards have already reported to him about Yulia?"

- Yes, but when does the desire to think arise? – showed impatience Kote.

- When does he move away from the hustle and bustle, worries, everyday life? Leah suggested.

"Everyone has their own way," Nino finished not quite confidently.

- Isn't sympathy a moment, as Adam Smith says, of understanding what is going on in someone's mind and psyche? Empathy? - Alice asked Zaza in the meantime, walking with him along the evening Eger.

- I heard that love is when two people look in the same direction ...

- And that a man falls in love with a woman, and a woman in perspective. Is it always like this?

- You won't leave me after the trip? meanwhile, Sofiko asked Vano for his intentions.

- Are you crazy? Why would? Vano wondered.

Is it true that if you don't love, you won't be loved?

- Of course it's true!

- Great!

- And the fate of a person in his character?

But there are three of them! The one that is attributed to him, the one that he attributes to himself, and the one that actually.

- Tell me how you see me, and I'll tell you if you're right or not!

Yes, I don't really know myself. And you ... But I trust my heart, which has never let me down.

Sofiko returned to the room earlier than Ketino, which surprised her a lot.

- You were with him for so long?

- With whom else?

- Have you taken another number? But I gave you this one!

- Stop, Sofa, these jokes!

Rusiko, Manana and Mziya had fun too. They considered purchases, admired, squealed, laughed, and Dato and Giya, hanging their ears, patiently listened to their chatter.

- That's the jeans!

- And these! Look! Suede pants!

- Yes you wait! Here they are, those boots!

- Such a beauty needs them! You without them...

- Yes, but I really want to flaunt, preen!

- Is there in front of whom?

- Well!

- And you give it a chance?

- In general, yes!

- And here is the service for twenty-four persons!

- Is it true that gifts give pleasure to those who make them?! When I get home, I bring a gift for everyone. I will make my family happy.

- Do they themselves remember you on trips?

- How to say. Anything happens! I take no offence.

- Nu, so order!

Sergei, missing the guys, slipped away to their room, where the game was in full swing.

- Then, Pinochet, you are a teapot! See, covers your tambourine? Why do you immediately go to him, - Boris Shalva taught.

- But as? No move, go with a tambourine, haven't you heard something? he justified.

- That, you teapot! Boris continued to be indignant.

- Leave the man alone! He knows what he is doing, - Denis joyfully covered the opponent's cards.

- Guys, let's live together, huh?! Kako meowed.

Scolding, clapping, praise, insults, encouragement now and then fell upon each of the players.

"There are no pessimists among gambling people. That's for sure!" - Sergey noticed to himself and, having held out for no more than half an hour, retreated to himself. "We are killing time, and time is killing us," he flew up the stairs.

One thing is clear to me: do not play with fate, but build and direct it with a correct, working life. Oh, what melancholy, my heart is languishing... Pushkin himself said!

I should have taken a book with me on the road.

- Yes, but who would have thought that there would be a desire and there would be time. There was still time to kill. He walked around the room, stood at the window, reminisced about the past, but everything led to the table, and therefore, to the letter. Consciousness prompted that this is now the best thing for him to do.

“Not a word from you again. And even though there is an abyss of people around, one, as before, is killed! My gentle, quivering friend, it's embarrassing to bother you so often. Forgive me if I'm tired, but your long silence is painful. I was wrong when I told you at the meeting that silence is the ideal of communication. I have never felt such warm feelings for anyone as I have for you. I had few very close friends, and I must have been content with quality rather than quantity. And there was almost no time left for anything other than study, work and home. He was fond of philosophy, sociology, many humanitarian issues, tried to catch the connections between phenomena and processes, phenomena of living and non-living nature, linear and non-linear in the material and spiritual worlds.

Correspondence, as a type of communication, has its merits, but, communicating with you in this way, I was convinced that it is far from perfect. And if the word is not a thief strike that even what is written with a pen cannot be cut down with an axe. So...

God, how tragically irreparable mistakes are made!

In correspondence, much remains not fully explained and brought to agreement. Well, okay, it's better than nothing.

With my health, thank God, everything seems to be fine so far, only the pain of those around me still makes itself felt. Isn't Rilke right that she leads you away, makes your life even more painful.

A lot of joy and happiness went away with my best friend, who suddenly died at the age of twenty-five. Car accident. He left and melted before our eyes, and no one was able to help him. And his most secret dream, to see his child, did not have time to come true. His wife was killed, life took its toll. The fact is that life has treated him cruelly, and the past five years have not dulled the pain. Then I realized for the first time that people really die, that life is a temporary stay in the world. The words of A. Blok often come to mind: life without beginning and end, chance lies in wait for all of us. And I also recall the words of a wise man: what we fear happens very rarely,

but what happens, as a rule, is what we least expect, and sometimes suddenly, unexpectedly.

The rest of the friends scattered in all directions. Many moved to Europe, the rest to Russia.

Every year there are fewer and fewer of those who go up to his grave. Last time there were two of us. His relatives also moved to Russia. Everyone was so scattered that it's scary to think. How life has dragged us across the countries. It's not very drawn to new acquaintances, here you are, perhaps, the first exception. I confess that I dream of meeting my soulmate and connecting my fate with it.

They say that destiny is character. But I do not agree with this. A sequence is more just: life, character comes from it, and fate comes from them.

They abuse your time and patience. Looking forward to our meeting in Kyiv. Mentally I write much more than on

paper. A lot has been gathered and unsent, a lot has lost its relevance due to prescription, I will try to convey a lot in new letters.

Wishing, but not worthy of your friendship Sergei.

He put in a number and the letter slipped into the envelope.

Already falling asleep, he went on about the memory, which pushed out from its depths those hours and minutes when from the Polytechnic Institute, at the cost of incredible efforts and everyday, painstaking and diligent work in the hot summer season, ahead of schedule, successfully completed all the work, and the swimming object - entertainment complex lagoon on Vera was commissioned on time and with high quality.

On the last day on the faces of the builders, and among them the students of the construction team, there were joyful and cheerful expressions. Everyone congratulated each other, threw them into the air and plunged them into the pool, into which, fortunately, they managed to pour water. He, Sergei, also had to splash around in the new facility. A classmate who came to the rescue, Norair, nicknamed Gentle by the girls, managed to ask him if he could swim without a lifebuoy and get an exhaustive answer from a flying and almost splashing down: I can, I can - Wow! But a complication still arose. Huge, not in size, and without that heavy overalls in the water became heavier than a millstone. Sergey's efforts were clearly not enough, and he smoothly sank to the bottom of the pool. Fortunately, Norayr managed to notice and realize this in time. He bent over his friend, but how was it to pull out an unbearable weight? Yes, and the drowning man himself did not resist the blissful immersion in water, as now in a dream.

In the morning, the tour group went to see the sights of the city, which Alice listed ahead of time.

The group was happy to see that the wine cellars are in order and in the center. They were located in the basements of residential buildings, public buildings and even the episcopal cathedral.

We succumbed to the temptation, sat in one of them before seriously surveying the former lyceum with the famous library and its unique, incomparable collection of ancient geographical atlases and maps.

At the thirty-fifth kilometer from Eger, we turned onto the highway to Miskolc, where we arrived late in the evening.

At the approaches to Miskolc, Alice was not slow to give the group some information about him.

Two hundred and fifty thousand people live in it. Not a little! And they develop metallurgy and heavy engineering, and brown coal is mined around. The city is not young. It preserved the ruins of a fortress of the thirteenth century, a Gothic church of the fifteenth. The city has a Polytechnic Institute.

- The same as in Tbilisi? Shalva exclaimed with irony.

From Mount Avash, almost in the center of the city, you can see the entire Mshikolts, with all its multi-colored brilliance of its central highway.

- Just like from our Tbilisi funicular, - Shalva was not slow to add.

- Shalva, let's listen to Alice and let's not interrupt her, - asked Zaza.

- Pinochet, how many times do I have to tell you! - Denis and Boris looked reproachfully at the non-listener.

Soon the bus opened the doors in front of the hotel on the main street.

The administrators asked Zazu and Alice to make sure that the group did not damage anything in the rooms, because high-ranking, important guests.

Zaza, having learned from the bitter experience of the group's antics, was not satisfied with one verbal warning, and offered to provide the numbers on receipt.

Everyone spent the evening in their own way, following the example of the previous one in Eger.

XXII

The main difference was, however, that someone put some of the remaining small things on sale in the hotel. There was a small incident at the end of the corridor.

No, you can't live like this anymore! Better death from iron than from starvation, Gia recalled the call of Spartacus's comrades-in-arms.

- Blimey! That's what I understand! Dato praised him. - It's masculine! No sooner said than done! But how? Nobody needs us without snacks and drinks. Even Mziya ruthlessly abandoned us and ran away to others. And without her ennobling and bewitching company, you and I are a pipe!

- And what was she to do when we exhausted all our resources, and we don't know how to talk about high matters that attract her so much!

- Well, so, take the crowbar off the fire stand and listen ...

- No, I'm not going to the wet business! - categorically disowns the scrap Gia.

- Well, sit down and don't ask me for anything else. Understood? Dato went to the booth alone.

- If you don't want a crowbar, - he turned around, removing the crowbar, to Gia, who was dragging after him, - grab, so be it, a pickaxe. There it is, with the red wooden handle.

With the help of tools, they fumbled with a locked tall, white refrigerator for not very long. They did not want to break, mindful of the receipt, and without violating integrity and safety of the mechanism built into the handle of the refrigerator, deftly pry the door and politely and carefully remove it from its hinges.

- Fathers! Gia exclaimed with joy and surprise. - how much good is here!

- You see! What am I telling you!

- And a drink, and a snack of the world, - Gia rejoiced, emptying the shelves.

Hanging the door back was a trifle indeed, as well as hanging a crowbar and a pick in place, fortunately, the subdued light facilitated the operation.

The table was literally bursting with whiskey, brandy, vintage wines, cognac, Coca-Cola, fried chicken, boiled fish, sliced cheese, smoked lard.

- That, it turns out, for which firefighters arrange stands! Gia roared in delight, surveying the unfolding spectacle.

- Well, have you realized that we are protected not only by the police, but also by the fire brigade?! So go and bring Mzia here. You can lie to her that today is my birthday!

The most fun of all that first evening in Miskolc was spent by Dato with Gia and Mzia, invited by them to the feast.

In the morning, early in the morning, headed by Zaza and Alice, purposefully went to see the sights of Miskolc.

We started, of course, from antiquity, from the glorious ruins, after which we examined the Gothic church. In the afternoon we drove and walked a little along the suburb of Diosgyor, which merged with Miskolc, and had a little refreshment in one

of its espressos. and upon his return, Boris was the first of the whole group, to his great joy, to notice at the entrance to the Ikarus hotel with the inscription "Minavtotrans" on the wall.

- Everyone, guys, live! No cards, let's get down to business!

In the evening, a rumor spread around the hotel about the heroic deeds of Dato and Giya. The rooms of Vano, Sofiko, Boris, Shalva were examined.

Denis and Sergey did not dare to touch the room, because due to the limited number of places in the hotel, the guide of the group, Zaza, was added to them. Alice rented a private double room at a nearby hotel.

Dito refused Dato and Gia's proposal outright and chose to stick with his remaining meager savings and reserves.

While Denis, Boris and Shalva had fun with those who arrived on the Minavtotrans bus in a bar-restaurant, Vano and Sofiko, together with Dato, Gia and Mziya, were drinking in one of the rooms, and Dito had a small company gathered - he and Nino hosted Kote and Ketino.

Zaza and Alice, together with Kako and Leah, Rusiko and Manana, went out for a walk in the evening Miskolc. They even climbed Mount Awash, and at the sight of the unfolding panorama, Zaza especially experienced the happiest moments in his life.

Sergey, secluded in the room, again indulged in memories. Dito and Nino's conversation at a small feast was delayed. Not everyone agreed that everything was vanity and vanity.

- What then is the use of a person from all his labors?

- And what is so much in the world that the wise did not dream of?

"But why, then, should a man work under the sun, if all his days are sorrows, and his worries are sorrows?"

- After all, the Creator said - to work in the sweat of his brow and so get his daily bread, - repeated Ketino.

"And that everything has its time and its hour," Nino remembered, "but most of all, the lines about the fact that whoever does not know how to hate cannot love," Kote said.

- And what is written next, you know? That it is not in the power of man, but from the hand of God, it is good to eat, drink and delight your soul from your work, Dito emphasized.

- So, you still need to work? Not that some of the group are unaware of who eats and drinks and sees the good in work! Kote picked it up. They argued, or rather, exchanged opinions for a long time.

Finally Kote exclaimed:

- Guys, I have a toast! - and poured out the remains of red vintage Georgian wine from the stock.

- Enough, perhaps, to drink! Nino hesitated. - The third bottle was blown out!

- And what is three bottles for four?! Kote was outraged.

- Don't count us and Nino! - objected Ketino

- Okay! – conciliatory agreed Kote. – Last toast! For what? For kindness and good deeds! May we make them for the rest of our lives!

- It's delicious, - Nino admitted, - it's a pity that the wine is over.

- What are you! A little bit of good, - protested Ketino. The conversation continued already with the participation of Denis and Sergey, who slipped out of the restaurant, leaving there, in the company of two respectable ladies Shalva and Boris.

But they did not stay there long and left, inviting the ladies to their room, one of whom slowed down on the road and preferred to go to rest, while the second, who liked each other with Boris, did not follow her. Shalva was left with nothing, but successfully continued to be "third wheel".

The night passed not without fun, adventure and pleasure. And it was not Boris who had fun with the guest, but Shalva. Far after midnight, they said goodbye, and Shalva thanked her for the joy of human communication, she is for understanding that people complement each other, that there are no other people's problems.

Boris, meanwhile, found Denis in his room at the TV reveling in anticipation of his fights of boxers, professionals from America. Boris admitted that he hates this sport, and it turned out that Denis can't stand it either, but how to miss the fight of Cassius Clay!

"Look," he jumped up, "look what they are doing, you have to endure this!"

- They probably end up badly sooner or later? Boris suggested.

- Perhaps, but before that they live well. Money, friend, money turns the world. And without them, it turns out the way we do.

I don't want that kind of money!

- That's because you don't have them. And they will appear, you won't know! There are many, but I want more. How luxurious they are in America and Europe, and how they vegetate in Africa.

- From a month ago, stunning footage from Australia was shown on TV. Non-standard sheep were shot at point-blank range, and do you know how they explained this forced measure?

- How? Denis asked, looking up from the TV for a moment. - To not get sick?

- And they threw the ground with the help of a tractor. Can you imagine? They rage with fat, and in Africa they swell from hunger!

- And, in your opinion, transportation costs nothing? She costs them several hundred times more than shot sheep! In addition, there are many rich philanthropists in the world who subsidize the hungry and the needy, and act, among other things, according to the principle of Francis Bacon: money is like manure. Do not scatter, there will be no sense.

- Exactly! True, for everyone! Voltaire said that when it comes to money, everyone professes the same religion.

- Even the mother of Karl Marx said that if Karl, instead of writing so much about capital, had made it himself, it would have been much better.

Soon returned from Dito and Nino and Sergey.

- And where is Zazu so far? he asked as he settled down for the night.

Boris also showed interest in this:

- Can I use his bed?

- Why? Boris was surprised. - Did you quarrel with Shalva, or what?

- Well no! The lady was there when I left.

- Well! Somehow get settled in a folding chair! Sergei suggested.

They talked for a long time lying down and waiting for their guide, who never showed up.

Meanwhile, Alice fell asleep in her room Zazu, before parting, a hail of questions. She asked, in particular, why the young members of his group allow such extraordinary behavior.

Zazu himself was upset and even depressed:

- My first impressions let me down. There, at the airport, when I first saw them. In Tbilisi, they seemed completely different to me, although I looked at each one for a long time, but I was mistaken in almost every one. And we say: life experience!

- Oh, - Alice took a deep puff, - it's not a big problem, sometimes they make mistakes in matters much more serious! And about life experience, Confucius himself said that this is nothing but a small flashlight, - Alice pointed with her fingers.

- It is attached to the back and does not illuminate anything other than the path traveled.

- Therefore, the past of a person always seems brighter than the future? Zaza asked.

"Perhaps," Alice laughed, flicking the ashes into a glass ashtray.

- It is quite possible, but rather even certain, that each of them individually is not at all what they are together.

- Who knows!

- They say that men remain children until old age, who need to be constantly looked after and looked after.

- Who's talking? Zaza started up, guessing what the answer would be.

- Women, of course!

What do men say about women?

"Ah... it doesn't matter!"

"Well, they say that a woman would be even more charming if you could fall into her arms without falling into her hands.

Have you ever wanted to fall into the hands of the woman you love?

- Well no!

- Why? Are you afraid?

- I'm only afraid of myself!

- What about women?

- I'm afraid of women!

- How did you get into my trap? A matter of chance or a banal accident?

- Rather a banal trip.

Do you think this is predestination?

"Perhaps, since I turned down a more tempting trip. By Spain. For the benefit of a friend.

- So, altruism is to blame?

- I found myself in your arms. The rest doesn't matter.

- For me it has.

- Which? Marlene Dietrich claimed that women try to change men, and when they succeed, they stop liking them.

"So I'm trying to change you?" Alice was offended.

- Well, here, we drove, we drove ... and we arrived! Did you achieve this? Zaza grabbed her by the shoulders. You can't explain why you love. Love, and that's it!

How can you love the unknown?

- That's the whole paradox and the whole alchemy of love. Its strength is to accept a person with all his advantages and disadvantages.

- You're probably right. I've been wrong in the past, and now...
- Met me?
- Will you stay?
- Not! I'm afraid they'll do something again!
- "But these are the last two nights, aren't they?"
- Why the last? - Zaza objected, agreeing in his soul.
- Let's not build illusions!
- Illusions? Zaza was despondent.
- I knew ahead of time what I was going for, and how it would all end.
- How?
- Last, tomorrow night in Miskolc ...
- Well, it became ...

Early in the morning, Boris, in a bad mood, attacked everyone who came to hand.

Soon Boris was enjoying the aroma of hastily brewed coffee from his red kettle. Shalva refused in sadness, but then could not resist the temptation and succumbed to the intoxicating aroma of real, black, Brazilian coffee. Soon they were already waiting at the bottom along with the whole group of Zaza with Alice and Shandor's bus.

XXIII

- Yes, come on! Hurry up, don't delay! Everyone on the bus, take your seats, - Zaza exclaimed at the door, counting the incoming ones.

- A-u-u! Do I need it now? Tolerate his antics. - Shalva turned to Denis, on the way of the four from the hotel to the bus. "He counts us like chickens.

- Let him think! - Denis grinned, and the others silently supported him.

- Like our criminals under escort.

- Stop exaggerating! If you haven't slept all night, it's not his problem!

- It is still unknown what problems he has?

- It's none of our business, guys, we'll take care of our own, - Sergey waved him off.

- So! Everything seems to be assembled! Zaza was the last one to board the bus.

- Well, Shandor, touch the car, let's go!

The bus moved slowly.

The tourist group, on the last day of their stay in Miskolc, went to inspect the famous spa buildings outside the city. We started from the western part of

Diashgyor. We examined Lillafured in detail, with a magnificent palace, one of the most beautiful in the country. We took many individual and joint photos.

- You can't say anything, - Shalva admired, - you can't forbid living beautifully!

- It's good to live in the world. After all, people lived and live, - Denis noted.

- A good life is even better!

- Good, good, but nothing good! That's what I'm saying, we have! Sergei summed it up.

- Hamlet was right, there is much in the world that the wise did not even dream of!

- What are you Shalva, consider yourself among the sages? Boris asked.

- Not yourself, but you! Shalva said.

"There is nothing to talk about others, you better watch yourself," Denis jokingly threw him.

"They grow wiser from business, they grow old from idleness, they get richer from trade," Sergei began to list his observations, "they get fat from gluttony, they get bastard from fun, and they grow up from traveling.

- Wow! Blimey! - admired, praised Shalva.

On the way they discussed whether to sell Denis's camera or whether it would still be useful in Kyiv.

- We will be in Kyiv only one day, what is he there for, although ... - Shalva thought about it.

- How? We handed over there, to the bank, our savings! Boris recalled.

- Yes, - Shalva replied, - I will transfer them first to Tbilisi, and then further.

- If there is something left to take, - Boris grinned, and think without thinking about what will happen in the very near future.

- My militia and my country protect me, - Shalva chuckled.

- Then why have you and your family been rushing to Israel for so long? Boris asked.

- Uh, this is my friend, from a completely different opera. Many Jews dream of returning to their homeland in Israel. Don't you now dream of returning to your homeland as soon as possible?

- No, I want to stay here in Hungary, - Boris chuckled.

- And what kind of homeland are you talking about, he has two of them, - Denis reminded.

- No, now it's already three, - Boris clarified.

Meanwhile, the bus turned to a balneological resort near the town of Topolets, famous for its healing springs. Having tasted the water from them, they began to collect it in

some of the vessels that turned out to be with them - bottles, thermoses, cans.

In the evening, returning to the hotel, after dinner at the restaurant, we dispersed to the hutches according to the principle "ours communicate with theirs".

Yesterday's tourist group from Russia, who stayed at the hotel, was replaced by another, with a more youthful contingent, to the delight of the four, who spent their last evening in Hungary in a bar-restaurant with girls from it.

Dato and Gia persuaded Mzia to talk to Rusiko and Manana about the "refrigerator" operation in their room. After not long bickering, another white "impregnable fortress" was taken, and this time the guys were a couple without auxiliary items, which is called bare hands.

- Sleight of hand, and no fraud, - Dato joyfully exclaimed, tapping his palms against each other.

The contents of the refrigerator were rich and varied, and the invited Kako and Leah soon joined the group, who, in the midst of the feast, not without hesitation, but allowed to "dishonor" their refrigerator.

Later, Wano and Sofico came. Dito and Nino, Kote and Ketino, who returned from a walk in the evening Miskolc.

Zaza and Alice spent their last happy evening in Alice's room, at a nearby hotel.

- You are especially beautiful today, Alice!

- The French say: to be beautiful, you have to suffer.

"God, how she has changed," Zaza admired, "what does love do with a person."

What else do the French say? Zaza asked.

- Well ... - Alice hesitated, - oh, yes, - she remembered, - that whoever did not live before the French Revolution, that is, before the year one thousand seven hundred and eighteen, did not live at all.

- How interesting! Zaza laughed.

On the radio they played Bach, Glinka ...

Alice smiled.

- Really, how interesting!

A tear fell from Alice's eyelashes.

- What you? Zaza leaned towards her.

"Everything desired is so impossible that it is often undesirable, but possible," she said sadly.

- Or maybe all this is due to the fact that a person is impatient by nature?
- Yes, maybe...
- But the possible is also necessary for a person ...

The four danced with new acquaintances, not in a hurry for numbers. The girls laughed, but did not leave, they were still far from leaving.

- They say dance the only art in which we ourselves are the material from which it is created, - Shalva showered his girlfriend with statements he heard somewhere.

“They say that love is what happens to men and women who do not know each other,” Boris inspired his girlfriend.

“Mark Twain said about the maturation of love that it only seems to be the fastest,” Denis explained to his girlfriend, “but in fact it is the slowest. No man or woman knows what true love is until they have been married for a quarter of a century.

- Horrible!

- Oscar Wilde was right, - Sergei recalled in his room, - when he said that only the unfaithful in love know her joy. The faithful know tragedy. One kiss can really ruin a whole life, kind of quieter than a cannon shot, but its echo is much longer.

“My dear and affectionate friend,” Sergey began his next letter to Yulia, “B. Show argued that the ideal love affair is the one that is conducted exclusively by mail. They also say that love is temporary and ends in marriage. I do not agree with either one or the other, and it is good that in life everything is far from being so. Although there are exceptions, and I would classify our relationship as one of them. Life often turns out to be stronger than us, and hardly anyone manages to change it radically, which is an example of the entire history of mankind. But to try to leave at least some trace in life, I think, is both within the power and necessary for every person. Not such a trace, of course, as Herostratus, but the best - a beautiful love that turns on, sometimes inspires a person to great deeds and keeps the memory of him.

Julia, although our letters do not reach us, they are most likely intercepted or lost in the mail, I think our thoughts and feelings still convey to us the memory of each other. I understand that the first love does not fade away in memory until the end of life, and, alas, it is unlikely that she will find a full-fledged replacement. Loss fills the cup of pain of every person. Sometimes it seems that people have some kind of ode, a common pain that just seems to us individual. The pain is one, only each of us screams in his own way. For it is impossible, looking at this crazy world, not to hurt the soul. And I would not have endured this pain, like each of us, if it were not for

help from Heaven, which illuminates me with happiness to meet and make friends with such a wonderful person like you.

What could be more precious than this feeling of joy and happiness, and may the Almighty thank you for your sensitivity and kindness!

They say that real art is from pain, and it is like a dance on the edge of the abyss. I am riddled with the pain of many famous people who have become so only because of the monstrous cruelty of life and pain.

In your last letter, you write that you have devoted a lot of time to the secrets of the human psyche, and I

interesting result of your efforts. Did you get at least one? It is so hard! For centuries, spears were broken along this path, but to no avail.

It reminds me of trying to predict earthquakes, which seems almost impossible. It is impossible to predict where, when and with what force it will shake. But to judge the physical and mechanical characteristics of the process and the object, after the test, is another matter, and it is no less interesting. We have now touched upon, or rather, approached, one interesting sociological problem, which is not unknown to many, but judgments on it are often dissimilar. The question of the philosophy of behavior, taking into account the nonlinearity in its formulation, turns out to be insoluble. It may seem strange to you, but many times I was lucky when analogies of the behavior of mechanical, physical, on the one hand, and biosocial systems, on the other, were opened before me, which it was even difficult to imagine. As for fame, I could say about myself. I don't like her very much, I always avoided her and I avoid her now. The more heights I conquered in my life (if they can be called heights at all), the more acutely I felt an inner, instinctive desire, figuratively speaking, to dig myself deeper into the earth, to reduce to zero. I do not know why? Another thing is the inner need, the passion to conquer the peak, the set goal, and the joy of discovery and knowledge that follows them. But again, Julia, time overestimates values, and it is unlikely that all goals will be achieved. "Do not try to grasp the immensity," Kozma Prutkov advised, and when you comprehend one, you are convinced that the other is incomprehensible. It seems to me that my life is an attempt to swim across the ocean, I with difficulty (albeit with joy) swam across it, swam over it, barely got out alive, crawled out onto the shore, stood up, looked around, and not a soul was around. He sat down on his knees, despondent, called, - not a soul, remained at the broken trough. Had to wait a very long time

until fate and the waves finally sent me you. You won't talk to many people, but you want to.

Sometimes I had to talk to myself, then completely shut up. The artist Henri Matisse somehow escaped: "If you want to become a painter, tear out your tongue." I didn't know it then, but it all happened by itself - unintentionally. Then he took up "real sabotage" - he harassed paper and paste, trying to pour out his soul. At night, when the whole city was asleep, he wrote about human destinies, about the tragic incompatibility of people's desires. About the impossibility and incomprehensibility that hurt and torment souls so painfully, and about many other things. He wrote mainly for himself, and few people knew about it, because you can't understand a person if you don't go through all his paths and paths. And now letters to you and the feeling of your presence and communication with you inspire strength and give joy. I don't know what I would do without it. All the time we met, you were a fulcrum for me, and it's even scary to think what will happen to me if I lose it. Do not answer, please, to me at once, keep silent. How wonderful it is that you exist in the world, that the arrow fired by you hit me (you are a great calculator), that our friendship exists. How I wish it lasted as long as possible. I'd rather be content with that, but by no means lose it. What will be our future relationship? I will not hide, it worries and worries me. I will say more - my heart stops at the mere thought of it. You bring me to that line (and thank you for this, I might never have decided on it myself), in which the price of a mistake is too high and even one word can cost me dearly. But, on the other hand, I cannot but take into account your interest, I understand you very well. You're absolutely right. But, Julia, you must admit that this case is far from ordinary, and I have a request for you - be indulgent with me and if I unwittingly make any mistake, leave me the right to correct it. I

I've tried to keep the opportunity to avoid mistakes as long as possible, but now it's very difficult for me to start. I seem to be waiting, my life is about to end, and yet I decide with a deep sigh.

I can not live without you!

I know how stupid it is, and hardly anyone made proposals in a letter, and, nevertheless, I decide on it. I won't rush you, of course. Ahead is a meeting in Kyiv, I hope it will not let me down. I seriously think about staying with you longer, not flying to Tbilisi right away. Let's see how it goes. There will be complications with the guys, to be sure, but they are not bad, although they like to tease and joke. When we meet, I'll tell you and maybe introduce you. All further now, as before, depends only on you, and you decide the fate of our fragile friendship.

With a feeling of love for you, your Sergey.

XXIV

The next morning, at ten o'clock, Zaza's tourist group was watching the windows of Shandor's bus with anxiety and expectation. The arrival of especially important guests of the hotel was planned.

- Probably, the administration warned us about them, - suggested Zaza.
- Wow! Judging by the bus and things, they must be really important birds!
- We'd rather drive off before our tricks are discovered, - Gia was worried.
- Calm down, sit down and don't twitch, in any case we will have time to leave, -

Dato reassured him.

- And if they call the border and they won't let us out? Leah was worried.

- Not caught, not a thief! They will not be able to prove anything, - Dato did not give up, - he carefully carried out all the empty bottles, flasks and jars and threw them away.

- How else can they do it, if they want to! Leah exclaimed with conviction.

- If they want? And we will hope that they do not want to, - Dato stood his ground.

All involved in the operation "refrigerator" did not find a place for themselves and every now and then expressed dissatisfaction with the delay in departure from Miskolc.

Alice was the last to appear on the bus, having just said goodbye to the administration after long negotiations.

Well, finally, she is on board Shandor's bus, and he gives up mooring lines, drives off and soon leaves for the Miskolc-Sarashpatak highway.

It is eighty kilometers to Sharashpatak.

- No, after all, there is nothing better than a quiet life in the world, - Leah sighed with relief.

- Well, that's probably all! Our trip to Hungary is coming to an end! Boris said sadly.

- The road home will be shorter, - added Denis.

- If it makes sense to spend money, then only on books and travel, - Kako looked back from the front row.

- You have to spend and pay for everything!

- And everything that happens in the world, one way or another affects the future life, - Dito picked up.

- After all, life is ruled by chance, - Sofiko joined the conversation.

- and yet it is sad and sad that our trip is coming to an end, - Leah was touched.

Ketino quoted Anna Akhmatova in a low voice:

Gold rusts and steel rots,
The marble crumbles. Everything is ready for death.
The strongest thing on earth is sadness
And more durable - the royal word.

- Oh well! Don't be so upset! - Zaza tried to cheer everyone up. – After all, everything is in our hands, we will come again, well, let's say, in two years!

- Why Boris, you didn't like our trip? - Zaza, who heard him, stated.

- I liked it, but how? Boris ambiguously agreed.

- Eh ... - Shalva drawled, - it's more likely that a donkey will climb a tree than we will come here again in this composition.

- Well, why is Shalva, it's a matter of small things, you just need to have a desire and get some money for the road.

- Wow small, - objected Boris.

- Why, why, before because a person cannot enter the same river a second time, - Shalva explained.

A little more than an hour later, the bus drove up to Sharashpatak, Alice told her story with the same ardor, but no one was listening to her anymore. Everyone was overwhelmed with sadness.

We stayed in Sharashpatak almost until noon, where we dined.

- All my life I was taught not to get involved in anything seriously, - Zaze was whispering bitterly to Zaze sitting at the table next to me, - but I never learned this.

- B. Shaw believed that if you forcefully teach a person something, then he will never learn anything.

- He was right, - Alice agreed, - teaching is an active process, and we most often learn by doing, but this also requires will, desire, work and patience.

- But a bad result is sometimes also a result, and not always a bad one!

At noon, the bus moved from Saraspatak in the opposite direction, towards the city of Tokaj, and, before reaching Nyiregyhosa, turned towards Kisvard, and by evening, having traveled in total from Miskolc to the last Hungarian border checkpoint, about two hundred and fifty

kilometers, approached the small border town of Zakhon, on the border with the Soviet Union.

- Zahony, one of the largest railway stations in our country! Alice's voice was heard.

At the border checkpoint there was a long queue of buses and vehicles, which allowed tourists to have time to sit down for a small dinner in the evening cafe of the border checkpoint.

- That's all! It's over, - Alice uttered a tear, - everything ends someday.

Zaza stood, as if bewitched, nailed to the spot, moving his lips as if whispering something, and barely restrained the trembling of his hands.

Alice retreated to the beat of the Moonlight Sonata, and when she raised her head for the last time, she no longer made out his face, did not hear his words, and only a barely distinguishable silhouette eluded her gaze, dissolving into the darkness of a cold winter evening.

- Let's go, Shandor, but hurry, it's all over! – sounded sad, but demanding.

Zaza watched the departing bus, for the first time in recent years he realized that he was crying, that he was unable to resist the nagging pain, that he did not feel anything but her.

Customs control and inspection of the group was carried out carefully and painstakingly.

- It's better to return my electric saw for lumberjacks to me, - Dato started up in an undertone so far, to which Shalva snapped with displeasure.

- Why do you need it now, - Zaza said conciliatorily, - we'll come home, we'll buy you a new one!

- Who will buy ? - like a child, Dato was capricious, and a group of customs officers looked in bewilderment first at him, then at each other.

A push-button knife was found and confiscated from Gia, which caused his dissatisfaction.

- You see, - Sergei whispered to Boris, - it's good that you didn't sell the gold chain, otherwise you would be worried right now.

- Serge, go away, better pick up - say hello, - Boris warned him, - there was nothing to force me to enter it in the declaration.

.....

Although Zaza's group did not take away anything from the illegal, the customs inspection, the procedure itself caused a wave of anxiety and partly indignation.

What is that hockey stick? - the young customs officer was curious, unwinding the eleven cranked German spinning rod. - Who owns it?

- What's the stick? - Sergey, who turned out to be in the ranks, was indignant. - It's a fishing tackle.

- And why are you dragging him from such a distance? What, you don't have them in your country?

- It's necessary, isn't it? Shalva fumed.

- No, of course, - Sergey explained, - and besides, the guys persuaded me to buy it as a keepsake of Hungary.

Mzia enjoyed the beauty and elegance of the product, stroked the handle, waved the flexible fishing line.

In Chop, Zaza quickly found the right bus that was already waiting for them, counted and loaded the group into it:

- So! Everything seems to be in place, and without loss!

- Everything is in place, but you can't say the same about the losses! Shalva said.

- Nothing, nothing, little things do not count! The main thing is to get home safe and sound.

Late in the evening, a Soviet tourist bus drove off from the Chop border checkpoint. During the night it was necessary to get to Kyiv along the route Chop - Mukachevo - Truskavets - Ternopil

- Shepetovka - Berdichev - Kazatin - Fastov - Kyiv. In the morning the bus drove up to the capital of Ukraine.

XXV

Kyiv met the group with snowfall. The sky was covered with thick gray clouds. The fog and cloudiness grew stronger. Snow fell on the ground in a lacy transparent cover. They ate in parks and gardens along the streets rounded, hid their branches in soft white splints and gleamed dazzlingly under the flying, new flakes. Frost pierced everything living and inanimate with needles and penetrated people's clothes, as if trying to get into souls.

- Wow! Already the legs began to freeze, - complained Shalva.

- He said, put on the second socks! Boris scolded him.

- Never mind, we'll warm up in the hotel soon! Zaza encouraged the group. "I hope there are some wooden ones to keep warm."

- No matter how much you scold, they are also worth something, - Vano shouted joyfully.

- Well, and changeable weather, just like a woman's heart, - muttered Boris.

- Amanats hom gaakhura, ra, tavisu beats a woman! Shalva retorted.

- Zaza, if this continues, then, probably, we will not be able to fly out? Kako perked up.

- I'm afraid so, - Zaza agreed with him.

Me too, hesitated with my women (load)

Soon after settling the group in a hotel, Zaza went with Kako and Leah to test the flight situation.

They were distributed among the rooms very unevenly, some people, including Denis and Sergey, were placed not with their own.

Sergei, not waiting for Zaza's return, Kako and Leah could not stand it and managed to slip into the city, to Yulia's work, fearing that if he had to fly out in a hurry, from Kyiv, he might not get into her shift.

- But, as they say, there's a blessing in disguise, - Sergey thought, - that's it, I'll ask Zaza for permission to stay in Kyiv until the relationship is completely sorted out.

Zaza at first categorically refused:

- And I will be restless, and your relatives.

- I will call my relatives myself, but it is not necessary to speak at work.

- Okay, Zaza, well, what are you doing! - came to the aid of Sergei Denis. – You have to understand!

- Well, Zaza! It's something important, - resolutely took the side of Sergei and Shalva.

- Yes, for God's sake, Zaza! Me too! Boris intervened.

- Okay! Let's hope it works out, and we'll see.

The evening was spent in the hotel bar with a light drink.

Returning to the room, Sergei found his partner, a man of about sixty, not sleeping, but reading a newspaper under the light of a night lamp. He introduced himself as the director of the school, who came to the conference.

The conversation took an unexpectedly long time.

Sergei complained about the cold, Igor Sergeevich chuckled, called him a chill, recalled his acquaintances from Tbilisi, offered Sergei his second blanket.

In the morning, early in the morning, Sergei rushed headlong to work with Yulia. He ran into her when she and her colleague ran across the frost from one building to another. Called. She hesitated, turned around, froze, as if bewitched,

peered, everything, quickening her step, rushed to meet him and flew straight into his arms.

Julia settled things at work and an hour later she and Sergei, joyful and happy, wandered around snowy Kiev, interrupting each other, remembering something for a long time, repeating, reminding, gesticulating and exclaiming.

Julia showed something, called, explained. Sergey was dumb with delight, lost, collected his thoughts, again lost the thread, and the only thing he didn't miss was Yulia's hands from a clenched palm.

A little sobered up, but, right there, St. Sophia Cathedral returned it to its previous state. Yulia was constantly talking about Bohdan Khmel'nitsky, about architecture, about antiquities, masonry, paintings, mosaics, white stone, the faces of saints. Her voice murmured, flowing into him. He choked with delight, looked from her flaming face to the amazing walls and domes, and everything was organic - delightful and absorbing and exalting him somewhere. This apparently went on for a long time. Finally, it seemed to him that they, apparently, were leaving their already familiar, already native limits, shocked by what they had experienced, what they had seen. All day he walked dumbfounded. Julia laughed and asked:

- Well, how are you? What happened to you? - although she knew and understood everything very well.

Before we could look back, the early evening had fallen. They walked at dusk and in the thickening darkness. He could not share the impressions of one and the other. What he saw and felt shocked his mind, and he seemed to be truly stunned and dumbfounded.

- What happened to you? - Julia smiled, and recalled her old emotions in the same situation. The shock continued even after she and Yulia parted at her house, and already at the hotel, where the tirades of a neighbor in the room, Igor Sergeevich, merged for him into one continuous rumble.

He took in the whole trip through Hungary, which seemed to him now, because of the behavior of the group, empty, fussy, earthly and almost completely devoid of meaning, apart from, of course, the beauties of Budapest and other cities of Hungary.

The next morning, on Yulia's free day, we went to see St. Andrew's Church. We walked along Vladimirskaia Street to the cliff of the Starokievsky Mountains, towering above Podil. The ledge of the mountain, like a high pedestal, was enlarged by a wonderful graceful church.

- How graceful! Sergei burst out.

Catching his genuine interest, Julia began to tell.

- St. Andrew's Church is the most modest building of all buildings, but, perhaps, it surpasses everything in harmony and light bone. It is seen as majestic and elevated to a great height above the Podil spread below, with its clear network of rectangular

quarters and streets, and is drawn against the backdrop of green meadows and the silvery ribbon of the Dnieper running towards the blue horizon...

We also looked at the interior. For a long time we stood at the composition "The Sermon of the Apostle Andrew on the banks of the Dnieper".

We also managed to see the St. Vladimir Cathedral in the neo-Byzantine style, a relatively new church built at the end of the 19th century, painted by Vasnetsov and Nesterov.

And for a long time, unable to break away from each other, they walked along the snowy Khreshchatyk, talked about themselves, about their past life, remembered some important, some funny stories and trifles.

Returning late, full of feelings and impressions, Sergei found his friends playing preference. I sat with them for a while, began to share my delight from what I saw, to advise them to visit the sights, but, seeing that it did not arouse the slightest interest, I went to bed.

The next day, the group, freezing all day at the airport and not waiting for the flight, in full force, except, of course, Sergei, returned back to the hotel and in the evening arranged a small feast in the restaurant, saying goodbye to Kiev, confident that the next one, already the fourth day they finally get lucky with the flight.

Sergei, according to the custom of the feast, disappeared long before it ended and waved to work with Yulia in the hope of meeting and taking her home. But this time Yulia had to be on duty all night, and she and her partner left Sergei with them.

Thinking of a small feast, they cheerfully spent all the duty until the morning, not yielding, perhaps, to a feast at the hotel.

Long after midnight, the group dispersed to their rooms.

Vano and Kote, seeing off their girls, showed assertiveness under heating, and the girls, evading, merrily rushed to seek protection from the most "reliable" in this matter, Sergei.

In the room, where the girlfriends collapsed with laughter, they were met with no less joy by Igor Sergeevich, who politely and delicately offered his beautiful guests - fairies, a small treat, including glasses of alcohol. The guests did not refuse. A pleasant and cheerful conversation began and lasted for more than an hour. Igor Sergeevich ingeniously made the girlfriends laugh, but they gradually inclined them to sleep. For fear of returning to the room, they did not want to return, and Igor Sergeevich readily offered them to stay. Girlfriends looked at each other, but decided, in trousers and sweaters fell together in Sergey's bed and immediately dived into a deep sleep of tired people.

Igor Sergeevich, joyful and contented, carefully waited all night for Sergei's return. The next morning, the girls, waking up, jumped up, hastily thanked Igor Sergeevich for the warm welcome, and were like that.

Sergei saw Yulia home early in the morning, returned literally after their departure.

- Where are you still? - Igor Sergeevich unexpectedly attacked him, - what good girls he sent, but he didn't appear! I didn't sleep all night, and you...

- Excuse me, Igor Sergeevich, who are you talking about? - tried to find out what was the matter, but he did not stop scolding, from time to time shouting out the names of his nightly guests.

Sergei, without understanding, went to look for Sofiko and Ketino. There was no point in staying in the room; Igor Sergeevich would not let him sleep at least a couple of hours anyway. Having found the girls, he ran into them with questions, and they, laughing, interrupting each other, told him about the night's events and coincidences, amused, in the end, and Sergei.

Returning, Sergei somehow calmed the raging Igor Sergeevich, after which they slept like the dead for several hours in a row.

Sergei was awakened by his friends, who once again gathered to go with the group to the airport.

Having estimated that Yulia was sleeping off after a sleepless night and should not be disturbed, Sergey decided to go with a group to the airport to see his friends and wish them a happy flight. The fog was really dissipating, only small snowflakes continued to circle in spiral trajectories, slowly falling to the ground.

"I feel it with my ass, we'll fly soon," Shalva gritted through his teeth.

- Did you doubt that Sergei had a happy leg? Denis was outraged.

- Sergey, maybe you will decide after all and fly if they announce landing, huh? Zaza asked him.

- I can't, Zaza! I just can't, - Sergey completely refused, though not without sadness, - a fateful moment in my life, - he lowered his voice conspiratorially.

- How do you know? Zaza asked.

- I know, I feel, and that's it! - almost minted Sergei.

- This is how we lose our people, - Shalva ironically uttered and stepped sideways away from Sergey.

- Okay! What to be, as they say, cannot be avoided, - Zaza agreed with him.

Soon, indeed, boarding was announced for flight seventy-two eighty-seven Kyiv - Tbilisi, and the whole group, led by the guide Zaza, after saying goodbye to Sergey, hurriedly headed to the check-in point.

XXVI

- "Borispol Control", eighty-five four hundred ninety-six, "technical check".

- Eighty-five four hundred ninety-six, "Borispol - Control", audibility four, the end.

Dear passengers, - a young stewardess in civilian clothes turned to those entering the cabin. - Please take your seats on time. The commander and crew of the aircraft of the Georgian Civil Aviation, welcome you on board the TU-154, which is flying on the Kyiv-Tbilisi route.

The flight time of the aircraft on the way is one hour and forty minutes, the flight speed is nine hundred kilometers per hour, the flight altitude is ten thousand meters above sea level.

The air temperature at Boryspil airport is minus fifteen degrees below zero. Outside the plane at around ten thousand meters - 56 C.

"Oh, it's even colder there," Shalva complained.

"What did you think," Boris remarked.

- Please fasten your seat belts and remain seated until the aircraft has taken off and is fully climbed.

Mineral water, snacks and other drinks will be offered to you on the way, during the flight.

The crew of the ship wishes you good health and a happy flight. Thank you for your attention.

- Hmm, - Shalva chuckled, - and what other way out do they have, besides this?

- "Borispol - Taxiing", 85496, allow the launch.

- 85496, "Borispol - Taxiing", I allow the launch.

There was the sound of an airplane engine starting.

- Four hundred and ninety-six, allow the preliminary.

- 496th, preliminary clearance, RWY 24, TWY 4, TWY - snow, ice patches.

- "Borispol - Start", 496th, allow the executive, ready for takeoff.

The plane turned onto the runway and stopped.

- Four hundred ninety-six, wind sixty degrees, four.

At altitudes from fifty to one hundred and fifty there is a wind shear, executive and takeoff is allowed.

- Four hundred and ninety-sixth, I occupy the executive and take off.

- Listen, the Boryspil airport in Kyiv is named after you, or what? Shalva asked Boris.

- What did you think? Boris said proudly.

The airliner gradually increased the power of the engines, ran along the runway (RWY) with increasing speed, and finally tore the landing gear off the ground and soared into the sky, gradually gaining altitude.

Having gained the specified two hundred meters, the aircraft commander reported to the controller about the take-off and maneuver to exit the airfield area, in turn receiving from him the conditions for climbing. - "Borispol - Circle", 496th, takeoff, right on course one hundred and ten.

- Four hundred and ninety-sixth, "Borispol - Krug", dial one thousand five hundred, with a rate of one hundred and ten, dial one thousand five hundred, report one thousand two hundred.

- Let's go-ali! Boris exclaimed happily.

"Twenty-six seconds, normal flight," Shalva confirmed.

- Four hundred and ninety-six, I cross one thousand two hundred.

- Four hundred ninety-sixth, I understand, continue to gain altitude.

- Four hundred ninety-sixth, I continue to gain altitude.

- The flight is normal, but for some reason the ears are very pained, - Denis complained.

- And you do this, - Gia sitting next to him, covering his nose with the fingers of his right hand, - and exhale the air through your nose.

- I know better than you, - Denis dismissed, - but every time he lays down a new one.

Those sitting at the windows with interest and curiosity watched the dynamics of the take-off of the aircraft, its climb and how they gradually moved away from the earth into the heavenly heights, as not only terrestrial living beings and inanimate material bodies, but also others became smaller and smaller in size. Problems.

"Passion and an indomitable desire for flying has driven humanity since ancient times," Dito joined in the conversation, going over in his memory for his sister Nino, historical information about the great aeronauts.

"That's it, Sofiko, all our earthly problems seem negligible from above," Ketino inspired her friend, who was sitting next to her, by the porthole and staring intently into the whiteness-covered, snow-covered surface of the earth.

- The wise fathers say that earthly problems that are difficult to solve should be looked at from a height, first mentally ascending into the sky. From there they will seem much smaller and lighter, and it will not be difficult at all to resolve them.

- HM! Look who's Talking! You yourself like to complicate everything, - Sofiko noticed, - but I just keep saying: you need to live easier.

"We are talking about different things," Ketino sighed after a pause.

- Girls, what are you cooing about? Tell us, too, - asked Vano.

- Eh, it's a pity that you refused to sit here, next to us, - complained Kote.

- There is nothing! We already spent a lot of time and effort on you on a trip, "Ketino reminded.

- I would be glad, Vano, but Ketino, you know, opposed.

- For you that, a friend is more important than a friend? Vano was alarmed.

Sophie hesitated a little.

- In the air, as well as at the crossing, horses and friends do not change!

- Mziya, I would not like to interrupt our friendship after the trip, - Dato was deeply moved.

- And what do you suggest? Mia laughed. "Shall we go somewhere else, but to warmer climes?"

- With pleasure, but without Gia!

- Ha-ha! Without him, we would not have become friends!

- Do you like him more than me? Dato was taken aback.

- No, with him I feel safer with you!

- And what, I allowed myself something?

- Of course not! But I told you, Dato, that my fiancé is waiting for me in Tbilisi, and in an hour and forty he will surely meet me at the airport.

- So it's all over? Dato looked sadly into Mziya's eyes.

Mzia raised her hand and gently patted his bangs on his forehead, he held it, raised it to his lips and kissed it:

- Because I love you, Mziya.

We don't have much time for that! Mzia released her hand.

- Think. I will do everything for you. I have never met such a beautiful and good girl like you.

- You will meet, and not just one, - Mziya promised, - I'm over there by how many years older than you.

- Yes, what does it matter!

"Thank you, Kako, for such a wonderful trip," Leah thanked her husband.

Yes, I'm happy with myself! Kako agreed. "Despite everything, she still redeemed herself.

- It's good all the same, Rusiko, that we went with you! Manana shared her thoughts.

- Yes, they've done a great job, there will be something to please the family! Manana agreed. – And besides, I really liked Hungary.

Zaza sat alone in the front row and mentally wandered with Alice through the evening, bright Budapest to the tune of "Moonlight Sonata".

- Boryspil - Control", four hundred and ninety-sixth, "Dnepropetrovsk - Control" does not answer one hundred and thirty-one and two.

- Four hundred ninety-sixth, "Borispol - Control", work with me.

- "Borispol - Control", four hundred and ninety-sixth, communication "Dnepropetrovsk - Control", strong interference.

- "Dnepropetrovsk - Control", four hundred and ninety-sixth, nine thousand six hundred, light, strong turbulence in the clouds.

- 496th, "Dnepropetrovsk - Control", seventy light spots are ahead on the track, the board passed ten thousand one hundred above the clouds, the upper edge is nine thousand seven hundred.

- Four hundred ninety-sixth, allow me ten thousand one hundred.

- Four hundred and ninety-six, dial ten thousand one hundred.

- Four hundred and ninety-six, dialing ten thousand one hundred.

Two pretty girls - flight attendants, smiling affably to the passengers, took out mineral water in turn, - four hundred and ninety-six, dialing ten thousand one hundred.

Two pretty girls - flight attendants, smiling affably to the passengers, took out in turn mineral water, lemonade, tea and coffee, poured into small plastic cups, neatly stacked in rows on plastic trays.

- What will you drink? Shalva's voice rumbled.

"The same as you," Boris answered him.

- So, vodka, - Shalva concluded and took two glasses of mineral water from the stewardess's tray, one of which he gave to Boris.

- Oh, - Boris was amazed, - look how she hisses and how many bubbles she has on the surface!

- Yes! You see it for the first time, right? You don't know that the rings of high-grade vodka blur, float on the surface, - Shalva explained, drinking from a glass.

- Fool, - Boris corrected him, - this is not with any vodka, but with our zhipitauri!

- Which one did you sell to the Poles on the market?

- When will the snack be? Dato inquired meanwhile.

"Later," the stewardess promised.

- Why do you need a snack, I have so much of it! If you want, I'll get it! Mzia suggested.

- No, I'm just for communication! Dato explained.

"They say the coffee served on the plane causes vibration," Dito recalled.

- Oh, no, we just don't have enough of this now, - Nino denied, sitting next to her brother at the porthole.

- Eh, - Vano lamented, - they say the truth, that the faster the plane, the narrower the seats!

- Hmm, - Sofiko chuckled, - why is that?

"Something is not easy for the guys behind us," Ketino noted.

- The narrower it is in width, the longer it is in length, - Vano found himself.

"According to the law of meanness, the most beautiful passenger never sits next to you," Kote noted.

- But flaunts ahead! – picked up Vano.

- It's not the same thing!

- Aerodynamics unites all aircraft - rockets, planes, balloons - Kako explained to his wife.

"I dream of flying in a balloon at least once in my life," Leah admitted.

- Oh, - drawled Kako, - it's far from safe, and besides, it's very expensive.

- Yes, alas, you have to pay for all the pleasures in life, - Leah agreed with him, - Americans are a happy people, they are more able to achieve their innermost desires. As they say, you have money, wish!

- They, of course, have more freedom, but, perhaps, from this they suffer more than rejoice.

- Well, why, who is to blame if a person does not know how to properly use his freedom? Leah objected.

- Believe me, what a person or a society wins, some of it eventually turns against them. Yes, we, and even the Americans themselves, do not know what true freedom is.

"I know," Leah said confidently.

- Christianity, for example, teaches that it is freedom from sins. But obviously, everyone eventually comes to where his path leads.

- The fact is that this philosophical category is extremely subjective, - Leah added to him, - and each understands and realizes it in his own way, individually.

“We partly become prophets ourselves, denying and refuting the opinions and teachings of the prophets,” Kako warned her.

I want to live my life according to my own mind!

- Who will let you do it?

Leah looked offendedly, frowningly at her husband.

- No, I didn't mean myself now, but the surrounding society and people.

- Four hundred and ninety-sixth, "Sochi - Control", thirty on the right, removal of forty, oncoming nine thousand six hundred, TU-154, follow ten thousand one hundred.

- Four hundred and ninety-sixth, I understand, I'm following ten thousand one hundred, tell me the place.

- Four hundred ninety-sixth, azimuth two hundred sixty, offset one hundred and twenty, heading fifty.

- Four hundred ninety-sixth, I understand, following the course of fifty.

“The Chinese say that one must learn not to desire anything for oneself,” Manana suddenly remembered.

- Oh, Manana, don't we live like this, - Rusiko confirmed, - all we need from life is the well-being of our family. Look after everyone, clean, wash! When to make time for yourself?

“Yes, perhaps you're right, sometimes the day will go by so that you won't really look at yourself in the mirror,” Manana agreed with her, “you sink into the routine of family life and don't notice how little by little your family climbs on your head, and you are for them.” you become a servant.

- Oh, this ungrateful female domestic work, - Rusiko sighed.

- Men and children are amazingly ungrateful creatures!

- Yes, and this trip of ours is not to their liking either!

- Leave them alone, Kote! Vano advised. - Men are like a bath leaf, first they stick to a woman, and then they are washed off!

- A woman at once, and a snake, and an apple, and a pain in the stomach!

- We want to be understood as people, not as a woman!

- Leave them, finally, alone Kote!

- To go crazy, at least you need to have it!

- To love a woman, you need to know her well!

- Oh, finally, at least something clever said!

- Knowledge multiplies grief!
- As Pasternak's wife said, we are a battlefield for her husband.
- Wise men teach: if you want to get somewhere, go alone.
- Do you regret taking me on a trip with you?
- Of course not!
- And what is your silent answer?

The silence didn't break.

"I so wish that our joint flight did not end or ended in a catastrophe in the sky," whispered Dato Mzii.

- You really are crazy! Mziya got excited. – If only he had pity on his friend Giyu! What about Gia? Gia has already found a mate for a long time.

- Dato, we will quarrel over trifles, and destroy our friendship?! Let's take it to the end, - suggested Mziya.

- Exactly, until its end, the end, - Dato drawled dejectedly and touchily.

Dito and his sister Nino also quarreled.

"Remember," he reminded, "that history is full of examples of how powerful empires conquered by fire and sword collapsed, unable to withstand their own weight.

- The alarming problem of self-preservation concerns, apparently, not only a person, an individual, but also a whole state and even, up to, the most powerful empires, - Nino noted.

- Everything that a person or society tries to keep by force is destroyed by the truth! Do not be afraid of yourself, the truth, the truth. You need to be frank with people. That's all that is required in life.

- That is, you are for openness and pluralism, - Nino noticed, - but after all, the basis of the state is also its economy?

- The basis, which is, at least, should be the openness and sincerity of human relations. Even Lenin himself said that the state can be strong only when people know everything and consciously go for everything.

- But, alas, there is also bureaucracy, an integral part of humanity, which drowns the sincerity of relations, enveloping them with swamp mud, slowing down progress. And when you are bypassed in development by other countries, then sooner or later you begin to feel their influence and even some pressure, forcing you, if not to become the same, then dance to their tune. And then it collapses, and the whole outdated system ... rejects the thinking white crows from itself.

- All living things undergo aging and death after birth.
- God forbid to live in a transitional, troubled time.
- In muddy water, fish are well caught.
- Naturally, it will be to someone's advantage, and for sure, many will warm their hands on this. But what about the simple, ordinary people?

- Four hundred and ninety-sixth, "Tbilisi - Approach", go to the decline according to the calculation, take four thousand two hundred.

- Four hundred ninety-sixth, began to decline.

- Four hundred and ninety-six, ahead of the board, removal of forty-five, follow the course of three hundred and ten to the team!

- Four hundred and ninety-six, following the course of three hundred and ten.

- Dear passengers, our plane has started to decline, and our flight is coming to an end, - a new stewardess, who appeared in the cabin, began her final speech. - In a few minutes, our plane will land at the airport in Tbilisi.

The air temperature in Tbilisi is plus four degrees Celsius, the wind is northwest, medium, moderate.

Everyone is requested to fasten their seat belts and remain seated until the aircraft comes to a complete stop.

engines and supply to it a ladder.

The crew and commander of the Georgian Civil Aviation ship thank you for your participation in the flight and wish you all the best in the future.

Thank you for your attention! - a young pretty girl disappeared behind the curtain.

- Here in Hochland there is such frost and snow, and we have a positive temperature! Shalva delighted his friends.

- Whatever you say, but a paradise, our country is a corner! Gia exclaimed.

- There are warmer countries, - Denis interrupted.

- What do you think, in vain did our ancestors in the past moved to live here?

- Four hundred and ninety-six, I cross one thousand six hundred.

- Four hundred and ninety-six, work with the "Circle", one hundred and eighteen and five.

- Four hundred and ninety-six, with the "Circle", one hundred and eighteen and five.

- "Tbilisi - Circle", Four hundred and ninety-sixth, I cross one thousand four hundred, I set the pressure of seven hundred and forty-eight millimeters.

- 496th, "Tbilisi - Circle", azimuth one hundred and ninety, distance forty-six, approach cleared, transition level one thousand two hundred, cloudiness sixty-five, visibility one thousand five hundred, wind three hundred degrees, five, dry runway, grip zero six, continue to descend .

- "Tbilisi - Circle", 496th, I cross one thousand two hundred, failure of the main landing gear exit system.

- 496th, act according to the rule in an emergency, repeat the exit of the landing gear.

- Four hundred ninety-sixth, continue to descend, repeated failure of the exit of the main landing gear of the aircraft, fuel supply for thirty minutes of flight.

- Four hundred and ninety-six, work with "Landing" on one hundred and thirty-two.

- "Tbilisi - Landing", four hundred ninety-sixth, fourth, six hundred, failure of the backup landing gear system.

- Four hundred and ninety-sixth, stop descending, go to another circle, we have gone beyond the cut-off limit.

- Four hundred ninety-sixth, I'm leaving for the second round.

"Here is our glorious Tbilisi," Shalva greeted the city from the plane.

- Yes, but something, it seems to me, we are circling over the airport for a suspiciously long time, - Boris was the first to doubt.

- Amas kvia krugubi myrtle, - Shalva chuckled.

- Now I'll come home, my mother will cook dolma, - Denis quoted the words from the movie.

- And I will immediately climb into a hot bath, - Shalva deliberately distorted his speech.

- It will be necessary to celebrate our return, - suggested Boris.

- Definitely, only after the arrival of Sergei, - Denis agreed.

- 496th, activation of the emergency gear exit system, landing gear extended, right landing gear failure, fuel reserve for twenty minutes of flight.

- Four hundred and ninety-sixth, take four hundred, go to the third circle.

- Four hundred and ninety-sixth, I take four hundred, I'm leaving for the third round!

In the cabin of the aircraft, some tension of the passengers was felt, turning into excitement.

- Dear passengers, - the stewardess hastened to reassure them with her appeal, unexpectedly emerging from behind the curtain. - We kindly ask everyone to stay

where they are and not to panic, not to create additional trouble for the crew of the airliner when solving temporary problems that will soon be eliminated.

1. This is circling over me (load.)

Why aren't we landing yet? Dato shouted.

- For the same reason why the Saakhov citizen did not sit on his dock during his trial, - Shalva explained aloud, - he could not, and that's it!

The first female cries and cries were heard in the cabin. Passengers gradually took possession of a slight panic.

Incessantly asked questions to each other, to the flight attendants, who tried in vain to calm and calm down.

- Dear passengers, trust us. For the speedy correction of temporary, minor technical problems, peace of mind is needed. Do not create unnecessary problems for the pilots.

- Do not be afraid! The main thing is that we arrived. And we will sit down or not, this is a secondary issue, - Boris Shalva reassured.

- And who is afraid? Let's not sit down, but Magis dedats vatiye, - Shalva grinned sadly.

"Magis ki ara, yes shen, simplified chven dedebis atireben," Denis corrected.

"Open the cabin door, and we will jump out of the plane when landing," Gia shouted, jumping up.

"Sit quietly," Denis put him in his place.

"I don't want to die," Mzia roared, "I'm getting married, my fiancé is already waiting for me at the airport!"

"And our husbands and children have been waiting for us at home for a long time," Manana, Rusiko and other women supported her.

- Dreams and desires come true in a dream and in the air, I told you, - Dato explained with Olympian calmness to Mzia who did not listen to him.

Zaza also tried in vain to help the flight attendants, until he was pushed into a chair by a certain male passenger unknown to him.

- Can you imagine how smart Sergei turned out to be! Refused to fly with us! Shalva suddenly remembered.

1. Well, to hell with it (cargo).

2. Rather, they will send us to them!

- Yes, don't talk! Another century will live, but we don't know, - Boris uttered with anxiety creeping into his voice.

- 496th, 200, right landing gear exit failure, fuel reserve for ten minutes of flight

- 496th, come down get ready for an emergency landing, on the lowered landing gear.

- 496th, I'm descending, ready for an emergency landing, on the extended landing gear.

Fuel to the fire of passions and panic of passengers was added by the fire brigade and ambulance cars seen from the plane, hurrying to the landing site.

The panic in the salon reached its climax, everyone screaming their fears of not getting what they hoped to solve.

"If my electric saw had not been taken away from me at the customs, this would not have happened now," Dato yelled.

- Yes, that's right, give him back his power saw right now! - Gia supported him from the front ranks.

- If I had known, I would have stayed in Ukraine, in Kyiv. I have so many relatives there," Boris moaned bitterly.

- And you just remembered them here and now ?! Shalva mimicked him. "Not when we were there?"

Sofiko squealed in fear, glancing at Vano and Kote sitting behind her and as if begging for help with her eyes.

Ketino, squinting her eyes, covered her face with her hands and recited prayers to herself nonstop. The only thing that was noticeable was the twitching of her lips.

Leah looked at her husband in fright, as if calling him: well, do something! You see what is happening!

- That's the advantage of going on vacation separately, - Kako ranted, - children will not lose both parents at once.

What will happen to them without us? Leah threw herself into her husband's arms.

Wano and Kote immediately forgot about their girlfriends, squirming around in their chairs in indecision and confusion.

- Citizens passengers! Calmly! I beg you, calmly, - the stewardess who appeared again almost shouted out. Our plane is landing!

For a while, relative calm reigned in the cabin. Surprised by the new message, the passengers, swallowing their tongues, listened, apparently, to the next instruction of the ship's commander.

- If you listen to me, we will land safely! So make up your mind. We ask all passengers on the right side of the board, in the direction of the aircraft, to sit on their knees sitting on the other side, as far as possible.

- 496th, I'm descending over the main runway, the fuel is exhausted, the landing gear, except for the right one, is extended, ready for landing.

- Four hundred ninety-sixth, I allow landing.

The aircraft smoothly flopped onto the left and then the front landing gear and, running at a sharply decreasing speed along the main runway, continued to maintain a state of equilibrium for quite a long time, almost until the minimum critical speed was reached, after which it nevertheless hit the right wing with significant friction on the asphalt surface of the runway, dragged by inertia first forward, in the end it was blown to the right, and it finally stopped far beyond the runway, near the cinder field of the airfield.

The bewildered passengers, as if not believing in the safety of the plane's landing, looked at each other for some time, until a joyful cry broke the silence.

They hugged, kissed each other, congratulated, still not leaving the right wing of the plane.

Many who could not stay on the port side were thrown to the starboard. Not without physical injuries, the main thing now was that in general, all the passengers remained alive.

- Thank God, we landed, - the dumbfounded Zaza took a breath, - finally!

Ambulances and the fire brigade hurried toward the crash-landed plane with sirens blaring.

Passengers were disembarked one by one, with the help of special inflatable emergency ladders, and then, with the help of airfield buses that rolled up, they were taken to the airport building, where those who met were nervous.

- Fu-u! - Zaza pulled with relief, - at the very least, I still brought them home.

The joy of the meeting alarmed and excited those who were waiting for the flight seventy-two eighty-seven, which had been delayed for several days.

Incomplete "four" was met by Nick, Denis's son-in-law, in his car.

- What's wrong with your eye, Denis? He was surprised and worried.

- And it was the girls who knocked him out, - Shalva joked.

- I warned you: beware of girls, like fire, especially on European territory, - Nick shouted. - Where's the fourth one? he missed Sergei. Did it fall out during an emergency landing?

- No, - Shalva drawled, - he turned out to be smarter than all of us and did not fly with us on this plane.

"The girls took him away from us," Boris added to his friend.

- Well, it can't be! Nick was surprised.

- Maybe, maybe! Let's go quickly, I can't hang around here anymore, - Denis asked, putting a wet handkerchief to his blackened right eye.

- And where is it? Nick pointed out. - In Hungary?

- No-no! In Hohland, in Kyiv!

"Oh, my poor grandmother Rosa, I've always loved and will love her, and I'll never forget her, as long as I'm alive," Nika did not let up, sharply moving his car from the airport parking lot.

This is how we lose our people! - Shalva uttered with a grin already on the go.

"We don't lose anything, he'll come soon, we'll all get together again," Denis objected to him.

Saying goodbye to the four, Zaza began to see off the other members of his group. He was immensely glad and happy that none of them were seriously injured and did not get into the ambulance.

He himself now and then supported his bruised left hand with his right hand.

The group was quickly dispersed by meeting relatives and friends. Rusiko and Manana were taken away in a car by an elderly man. Miraculously, the surviving beauty Mziya was kidnapped from the airport, as she expected, by the groom.

Their parents arrived in a car for Ketino and Sofiko, and the girls took their children, Vano and Kote, with them. Frustrated Dato and Gia were followed by their friend. Dito and Nino, also safe and sound, were taken away by their parents.

Kako and Leah tried to persuade Zazu to go with them in the car of Leah's brother, but for some reason he refused.

Left alone in the airport building, Zaza walked several times from one end of the hall to the other, trying to fully comprehend what had happened to him and his group during the emergency landing and in general on the trip, and the more time passed, the more horrified he was and marveled at how miraculously they managed to escape and remain intact, though not completely unharmed.

"All's well that ends well," he shuddered.

But already sitting in the Hungarian bus "Ikarus" heading from the airport to the city, he more and more noticeably disconnected from the shocks experienced and switched to memories of a magical, mysterious trip, fabulous Hungary and the most expensive and important, minutes and hours with Alice.

XXVII

From the airport, after seeing off the entire Zaza tourist group with a happy parting word, Sergey returned to Kyiv in the evening with a small amount of money thrown by friends and, fleeing from the reproaches and teachings of Igor Sergeyevich, rushed to Yulia's house.

Yulia's mother opened the door for him.

- Who do you want? she asked, surprised and a little scared.

- Julia, if possible? Sergey hesitated.

- Julia? she asked. - And who are you, exactly?

- I'm Sergey, her new friend from Tbilisi.

- Ah, a new friend! That's it? - now Yulia's mother stalled, trying to gain the time necessary to think about further actions. - Yulia is not at home. Maybe give her something?

- No, nothing, I'll come back later if I can!? - Sergey hesitated.

- Mom, who's there? Yulia's voice was heard from the depths of the apartment.

The mother was dumbfounded, numb and noticeably changed in her face.

"Are you here already, baby?" she finally answered, turning her head in the direction of the voice and trying to get out of her uncomfortable position. - This is for you!

Sergei stood in front of the open door, drooping, as if he had done something wrong.

- Oh, Seryoga, hello, - Yulia exclaimed joyfully, - it's good that you figured it out and came yourself. Come in, why are you standing at the door? - she took Sergei by the hand and pulled him into the house. - Meet, dear, this is Sergei, - smiling, she introduced the guest to her family.

Sergei nodded his head in greeting.

"We know each other in absentia, we've heard a lot," reminded Yulia's mother.

- Julia only talks about you, - grandmother greeted Sergey, - her ears were buzzing with stories about your decency and kindness.

- Well, what are you! - Sergey was confused. - She is your miracle!

- Oh! Well, it really is so, - the grandmother agreed, - sit down, sit down, there is no truth in your feet!

Mother stepped aside, and then went out the door altogether.

Yulia happily listened to the conversation that began between her grandmother and Sergei.

- You know, young man, I also had a little romance in my time, - my grandmother remembered the past, - with a Georgian.

- Yes? Sergey perked up. - Well, how did it end?

- Whether his hero is alive or not, I don't know, but the novel is still alive in his heart and has not yet ended.

- Tell me, granny, in more detail, - asked Yulia, - why have you never mentioned this before?

- Who knows? Apparently saved.

- Really curious?! Sergey has already asked.

- In the summer of the fortieth year, I then rested in Yalta ...

- Fifty years ago? Sergey calculated.

- I do not know. Probably, Grandma agreed.

"So you haven't been married to your grandfather yet?"

- Not! She left as soon as she arrived from Yalta. But then I seriously thought about marrying a Georgian!

- What was his name? Sergey asked.

- George. But I called him Gogi. He was such an interesting, high gallant cultured one, - my grandmother listed.

- By the way, a little like you, young man. Only taller.

- I hesitated then, avoided marriage, fled to Yalta, and here it is!

- And what, you and your grandfather were bad? Julia exploded.

- Badly? Not! It's a sin to complain, but a person always wants better.

- From goodness, goodness is not sought!

- It's true! Certainly! But if not for that case, what would I tell you now?

Everyone laughed merrily.

- So?

- What's next? Then my girlfriends married me off!

Cat Maxim jumped out of the kitchen, with a meow asking for a place at the feet of Yulia, the cat Maxim who missed her.

- What a beautiful! Sergei exclaimed.

- Meow! Maxim mewed in gratitude.

"Maximka, tell me how you catch rats and mice in our basement," Yulia suggested to him.

- Meow, Meow, - the cat explained in response.

- We release him out of need and for girls, so he disappears for hours, and often returns, throws a rat or mouse at our feet. Likes praise and kind words.

- Meow, meow, - agreed with Yulia Maksimka.

Yulia, having apologized, went off to the kitchen to see how things were going with the treat.

- Why did you drag this lop-eared man here? – was indignant at the sight of her mother.

- Mom, stop it, please, he's our guest! And then, it was not I who dragged him, but he himself came.

- It also characterizes him somehow, doesn't it? And he dreamed of the address, or what? And in general, his nose is kind of aquiline, and his face is arrogant.

"Mom, stop it," Yulia interrupted her severely, "I love him," she inadvertently uttered.

- What-oh? said the mother in amazement. - What more! Stay away from him before it's too late if you don't want to lose your mother.

"It's already late, mom," Yulia threw knives and forks on the table, "it's too late!"

- What-oh? mother was dumbfounded. "Did you have anything to do with that freak?"

"He is not ugly at all, but a very sweet and handsome guy," Yulia burst into tears and ran out of the kitchen.

- What happened, Yulechka? called her grandmother.

- It's all my fault, - Sergey drawled dejectedly, getting up from his chair, - I probably shouldn't have come.

"Wait a minute, we are glad to see you, and now we'll figure everything out," the grandmother kept the guest.

Julia rushed to her room to put in order.

- Excuse me, please, but I have to go, - he got up to leave.

- Julia, Sergey is leaving! - the grandmother called her granddaughter, who, to her surprise, came out dressed and ready to go out with the guest.

- Wait, Sergey, I'm with you!

"Don't you dare, come back now, you hear," her mother called after her.

But it was already too late, Yulia and Sergey rushed down the stairs.

Lena What are you? He is a guest, - the grandmother was indignant, hearing the knock of the front door.

- Mom, don't interfere, please!

What do you mean don't interfere? This is my granddaughter!

- I have no time, Mom, to explain to you!

- How? Does that mean I'm not important in the family?

Mom, and Igor! You forgot, didn't you? What is better for her to leave for Tbilisi or for her to marry Igor and stay with him in Kyiv?

Grandma hesitated a little.

"Yes," she drawled, scratching her head with her hand, "wow, I would never have thought that the same story that happened to me would happen and be repeated in some way with my granddaughter.

- Imagine that this is how it is, history repeats itself and is said to be the same three times: the first time as a tragedy, the second time as a fact and the third time as an American film,

so says the famous film director Spielberg, haven't you heard of him? Lena asked, straining her vocal cords.

"How could I not have heard, because day and night I only watch his films," admitted the grandmother of her daughter, for the first time hearing the pronounced name of a widely known to the whole world.

- Well, it does not matter. You can't be so rude to Julia. We must reckon with her feelings, with her tender and fragile heart!

- Oh, she knows a lot! She is still quite a child and sees life in a rosy light. And it's not so simple.

"So! Where could they go now? - thought the mother. - No matter how stupid you do in the heat of the moment!? I'll call my friend."

"Where are we, outcasts, going to go now?" - Sergey tried to joke in the meantime.

"We'll find somewhere," Yulia reassured him. - Kyiv is a big city, and I have a lot of friends and acquaintances in it.

- Yulechka, maybe you shouldn't ruin your relationship with your mother because of me. I'm nobody, but she's like nothing ...

- That is, how is it no one? Yulia stared at Sergey in astonishment. "Never say such words unless you want to lose me.

"I'm sorry, but she's still...

"Real and loving mothers don't do that.

- I don't want to be a bone of contention, understand!

- She herself brewed this porridge, and now let her disentangle it herself. Everything in the house is done as she wishes, so she is used to it.

- I am very afraid and worried about you!

- Shut up, and do not repeat!

- Don't worry and don't cry!

- Don't force me! - Tears flashed in Yulia's eyes, and she clung her wet face to Sergei.

- Well, I won't do it again, - Sergey promised, having risen and encouraged by her kiss.

- Yul, maybe one more time like that? he asked. - It was wonderful!

- Liked? That's it!

They walked along a bright, wide street, beaten, rumpled, driven out, but happy, cheerful and carefree ...

.....
on the internal telephone to the middle-aged colonel, the voice of the duty officer.

- Who is it? At such a late hour, - the colonel of militia was surprised.

- Two! Young. The girl says she is your daughter.

- Skip.

- I'm listening.

Approaching the door of the office, Sergei, in fright, read on it: "The head of the district department of the internal affairs department, police colonel Pyotr Nikolaevich ..."

- Wow, wow, led me to hand over to the police? – cautiously looked at Julia.

- What did you think? So just get away with it?

- Let's go, let's go, I'll show you where the crayfish hibernate.

- Yulia, daughter, - the colonel of militia exclaimed joyfully, getting up and interrupting the conversation of the employees.

Julia threw herself into her father's arms.

- My sunshine, haven't turned to me for a long time.

Yulia whispered something in her father's ear and added aloud:

- Come on, come to me, dzhigit! I'll look at you, - Pyotr Nikolaevich took a step towards Sergei.

"Yulia, maybe I'll go after all," Sergey murmured in a barely audible, embarrassed voice.

- What is it, jiggit? Aren't you afraid?

- No, but ... we seem to be at the wrong time.

- Well, hello, - Pyotr Nikolaevich shook hands with him, - welcome! Nice to meet and get to know you.

Sergei did not take his eyes off Yulia's joyful eyes. The kind handshake of Pyotr Nikolaevich added to his courage, and he introduced himself in an already strengthened voice:

- My name is Sergey.

- Yes, I know, I know, I heard from Yulia! Well, I'll offer you a case, let's see what you're up to? "Thank you, thank you," Sergei's voice trembled with joy. He shook Pyotr Nikolayevich's hand in gratitude.

- Thank you, dad, - Yulia's eyes moistened. - But the mother remains an impregnable bastion for us.

- Oh, this is a difficult question, but let's not rush, I do not advise. Chat for now, get to know each other better, and then we'll see. It happens that problems that people cannot solve are overcome by time itself. You still have it, there is no need to decide everything hastily and with a hot head. There is something to ponder. Where will you live? This is a no-nonsense question. Will Yulia agree to go to Georgia and live there among strangers.

"I will go with him even to the ends of the world," Yulia assured her father.

- Oh, this young girlish agility!

- It will be possible to live both there and here! Sergei found.

- Yeah! Okay! And I'm hungry, and you, probably?! Even though it's late, I invite you home for dinner.

- It's not worth it, - Sergey hesitated.

"It's worth it, it's worth it," Yulia insisted.

They were warmly welcomed by the mistress of the house, Claudia Ivanovna and her daughter from her first marriage, Liza. She and her ten-year-old daughter Olya entertained the guests with poems and playing the piano for the whole evening.

After a nice home evening, Yulia, refusing to stay so as not to let Sergei go alone, went out with him into the already almost bitter cold.

- Aren't you afraid to come back?

- Well, - Yulia shook her head uncertainly, - I'll go to my room, as if nothing had happened.

- Well, look, just in case, remember the advice of your father, do not cross your mother unnecessarily!

Both laughed merrily and for a long time.

- How is this possible if one excludes the other?

- Who wants, he can. Do you remember whose words these are?

- I do remember!

- You know, - Sergey confessed, - there was a moment when I even ... no, however, don't ...

- No already! Once started, so please finish!

- Well, okay, then I'll tell you!

- So, then we will stand in the cold and wait?

- How stubborn! This is not a very good character trait.

- Not stubborn, but principled!

- Oh! So: at first I regretted that I stayed in Kyiv and did not fly home with the group to protect you from trouble, but now, after meeting your father, I am convinced that I did the right thing.

- Yes, - Julia sighed, - it would be good forever.

- If I could!

- Okay! Will you come to work with me tomorrow?

- I'll go.

- Well, bye, - Julia abruptly kissed Sergey on the lips.

- Sergey looked after her for a long time, an easy, fast run.

It snowed again. The frost intensified. Sergey's hope for a successful outcome of his undertaking also grew stronger.

- So, you are walking late with a girl, but you completely abandoned me, - Igor Sergeevich met Sergey with playful reproaches.

- Yes you! We are still with you...

- I'm leaving soon, Seryoga ...

- Ouch! – something broke in the chest of Sergei.

The next morning, refusing breakfast, Sergei, joyful, for the first time in his life, himself, with his feet, with all his soul, with full consciousness, rushed to God, to St. Sophia Cathedral.

For the first time in his life, he felt a surge of the most tender and reverent feelings and could not restrain himself in a plea for the bestowal of strength.

to overcome obstacles, on the way to the realization of the most secret dream.

And more than once I heard my own inner voice in response:

"What do you want? After all, she agrees ... her father agrees ... "

He walked along the side chapels of the church, inhaled incense, peered at the wall paintings, mosaics, especially the Eucharist, Yulin recalled a story about her.

Leaving the cathedral, he carried out of it confidence, courage, readiness for action. The spiritual work done in him helped to realize how great happiness can be, at the threshold at which he stands.

In the evening, he enthusiastically shared his new sensations with Yulia, and both were captured and captivated by them. And on Saturday, before Sergei's departure, they took communion and seemed to have thrown a load off their shoulders, having fallen on them after a little trouble.

They went to a concert of a symphony orchestra, which Yulia had listened to with Igor shortly before. As if on purpose, when they left, they ran into him and Sveta, and Yulia had to introduce them to Sergey.

Igor did not shake the hand extended to him, but dryly threw his name in response.

- Kissing with one, then with another? - Igor suddenly threw in a temper.

Sergei was dumbfounded, as if he had been scalded with boiling water.

- Igor, stop it, - Sveta pulled Igor by the sleeve.

- No, why not? Let him know so that he does not harbor the hope that he is her last.

Sergei exploded, rushed to Igor.

- Do you want to talk like a man? Igor screamed.

- Please, with great pleasure, but not in front of the ladies. Let's go!

The girls in horror clung to the divergent guys and tried to pull them apart. They dragged it with difficulty, but still they pulled it apart. True, Igor threw after Sergei, who was being dragged away.

- If you touch your finger, I'll kill you! So know!

Yulia walked in silence for a long time. Julia decided:

- I have long wanted to tell you about Igor, but I was afraid, I hesitated ...

"You don't need to report to me," Sergey stopped her in a fallen voice.

Sergei did not appear for some time at Yulia, who had lost her peace.

He himself could not find a place for himself, he thought for a long time and turned off, which surprised and worried even his roommate.

Sergey got up in the morning not rested, with a headache, heaviness in his heart.

The neighbor was about to leave, and Sergey found it necessary to run for a drink and a snack to sprinkle goodbye.

As soon as he went out, there was a knock on the door, and a young girl appeared before Igor Sergeevich, introducing herself as Sveta.

- Are you with Sergei?

- Yes. And where he?

- Coming soon. And who are you to him?

- His girlfriend's girlfriend.

- ABOUT!

- What?

- It's good that they came ... Just now, when ...

Soon Sergey appeared with two plastic bags, probably with purchases.

- Sveta?!

- Yes. I came to talk to you.

Igor Sergeyevich nodded understandingly and left the room.

- Are you from Yulia?

- No, Sergey, - Sveta hesitated, trying to get comfortable. She doesn't know that I'm here now. I don't see her, I can't watch how she suffers, how hard it is for her. Of course, I have no right to interfere, but I think you have no right to do this with her either.

- How to proceed?

- Well, like this! What, don't you understand? They dropped one.

- I quit - Then who?

- I give her the opportunity and time to figure out who she needs more, more important, or something.

- But you...

The altercation dragged on, Sveta strengthened herself, but by the end she could not stand it.

You don't deserve her! Farewell! - she threw in response to Sergey's dry explanations and slammed the door hard.

Doubts, bewilderment, timidity held back Sergei for a long time, but the ever more assertive heat rising from the depths of his soul pushed him out of his place and drove him out into the street.

He appeared before Yulia embarrassed, with a bunch of scarlet roses in his hand. She froze in place, but approached ...

Igor did not let up, fiddled with Yulia and Sveta, with phone calls, asking for a one-on-one meeting with Sergey.

The meeting did happen.

Igor waited for Sergei at Yulia's house, when he turned back to his hotel.

- Nu, that, goat?! Good evening, right? - he greeted, jumping out to meet and blocking the way to Sergei.

- Skip it! I don't want to fight or talk to you!

- You look! And I thought that you Georgians are a brave people!

- How much do you know about us?

- I judge you! You're older than me, and the younger one was scared!
- Exactly, I don't want to offend the younger!
- Don't want to or are you afraid? Igor grimaced defiantly.

The teasing developed into a more offensive and threatening form of communication. Aggression increased. The guys at first lightly pushed each other, but then Igor took the initiative and was the first to move Sergey with his fist.

Sergei fell on the snow, but instantly jumped to his feet and answered the offender. And if it were not for the passing patrol UAZ PMG, who took both of them to the nearest police station, the fight would have ended in an unknown way. The bullies spent a frosty night in the bullpen, and the next morning, at the request of Sergei, Yulia and Sveta came running at the phone call. Julia begged her father to help release the guys on receipt, and the couples went their separate ways.

The bruises have long reminded the fighters of that vindictive night.

- If not for this UAZ, I would have killed for sure, - Igor boasted to Sveta.
- And how much would you get?

But she wouldn't get him!

- I avoided a skirmish in every possible way, and even more so a fight, but there was no trouble with him! Sergey explained to Yulia.

- I know, I know, - Julia stroked the bruises on his face, - you got it because of me!

Igor Sergeevich left without waiting for Sergei from the police and without saying goodbye to him. They didn't manage to put anyone in the room, and Yulia was perplexed when she went to the hotel after work, but she waited, and they stayed up late talking.

Sergei insistently offered to stay, but Yulia was prudently afraid to annoy her already fuming mother.

"Perhaps you are right," Sergei agreed in the end.

Julia asked not to see her off in fear of running into Igor, but Sergey confidently declared:

- I'm not afraid of him!

She continued to resist, Sergey picked her up in his arms, didn't let go for a long time, in fact, in his arms, and more and more felt the heaviness of her body, and she, exhausted, leaned harder.

- I'm tired of holding you!
- So soon? Well, let go!

But you'll fall to the floor!

- Well, let!

Both of them plopped down on the empty bed.

Julia stayed, and they loved each other until the morning. Early in the morning, barely taking a shower and hastily intercepting the remnants of yesterday, she rushed headlong home.

"Call me tonight," she nodded to him in farewell.

"Where are you so dry, you'll catch a cold," Sergey warned her.

"I won't catch a cold, don't be afraid, I'm hardened," Yulia threw joyfully, in parting, kissing Sergey again.

Sergei, beside himself with happiness, left alone, again fell into bed, trying to prolong the joy of a fabulous night.

From now on, they did not part for a minute. Yulia, without telling her family, took a vacation.

They wandered around the city, went around all the most secluded, cozy corners, went to exhibitions, to literary and poetic evenings, but did not stay anywhere, trying not to lose even a minute of intimacy.

But everything eventually ends.

Sergei's financial resources were coming to an end, and he could not afford to enjoy the courtesy generously offered by Yulia for a long time, and his family began to get seriously worried and surprised at his so long-drawn trip.

Yulia's intention to go with Sergei to Tbilisi met with fierce resistance, and indignation from her mother, who in the end managed to win over both her grandmother and all Yulia's close friends. Moreover, she did not even refuse to support Pyotr Nikolaevich, and for the first time after many years she went to him and persuaded him to seriously talk with her daughter about at least postponing the trip with Sergei.

Sergei and Yulia were exhausted, realizing that neither he could stay in Kyiv anymore, nor she could fly with him to Tbilisi.

They said goodbye quietly, sadly, sensitively. Julia burst into uncontrollable tears. Sergei could not stop his heartbeat and kept popping pills under his tongue.

Yulia was silent and in an undertone she was all over the place in tears, and Sergei, whose heart was breaking, swallowed and put under his tongue this one and that other medicine.

"That which cannot be changed must be endured," Sergey taught Yulia.

She raised her eyes, and he noticed with horror that they had never been so dark and sunken.

- Call, write

- Write, call.

"I still don't dare to give you this," Sergey pulled out a quadrangular bundle from his travel bag.

- What is it? Julia wiped her tears.

- These are letters to you!

- To me? When did you manage to write them? she picked up the bundle from Sergei.

- All from Hungary. I thought! You have to give them back!

A faint smile crossed Julie's face.

- So much? Amazing.

- I wrote much more mentally, including in Kyiv, but I did not manage to transfer it to paper.

Yulia lightly pressed the letters to her heart and stroked Sergei's right writing hand.

- Thanks! I myself wrote a lot to you, but I did not think to convey the letters. But now ... As they say, frankness for frankness ...

She clicked the lock of her purse. A stack of paper flashed.

- Less? Yes, sure...

- You think?

- I admit it.

They announced boarding for flight seventy-two eighty-seven Kiev-Tbilisi. Their eyes expressed bewilderment, as from something unexpected. Perplexity was immediately replaced by deep sadness. They said goodbye not only to each other, but also to love and life, the one that so filled them, warmed them, supported them, intoxicated them, intoxicated them.

- Not! No-no! Do you hear Julia?

Yulia gasped, buried her face in her hands, and Sergey asked two girls to support her and help her get out of the airport.

- I'll come, Julia! I will come! Soon...

Two hours at the gangway and in the cabin, before taking off from Borispol airport and before landing in Tbilisi, seemed to him the longest and hardest in his life.

At the very end of the flight, when the stewardess announced the imminent landing, he suddenly remembered that his friends had miraculously escaped during an emergency landing, they promised to tell about the details at the meeting. Now he wanted to get into a similar situation, die, an abyss, but, remembering Yulia, he

came to his senses, instantly discarded this wild thought, brushed himself off, listened ...

- Four hundred eighty-seventh, "Tbilisi-Posadka", fourth six hundred.

- Four hundred eighty-seventh, I understand.

- Four hundred and eighty-seventh, I'm descending, the landing gear is extended, ready for landing.

- Four hundred and eighty-seventh, landing clear.

- 487th, landing cleared.

The plane landed smoothly on the runway assigned to it and immediately began to abruptly decelerate.

"The guys were shocked during landing, and I was before takeoff."

On a bright sunny winter day, no one met Sergei at the airport.

- Sadness did not dissipate, but a warm ray of expectation of a meeting with family members, and long conversations and

memories of the four, dear four, who experienced so much and learned so much on the trip, the wonderful journey Tbilisi - Beauty Hungary - Tbilisi.

February 15, 2006

May be to be continued.

Tbilisi, 2014

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>

3.3 Paradise Lost

<https://proza.ru/2022/05/31/1459>

E-mail: samsgel@gmail.com

Gelkhvidze Samson (Tbilisi, March 26, 1958)



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.

Nominated for the Literary Prize "Writer of the Year" - 2021, and "Poet of the Year" - 2022. Awarded the Medal of F.M. 200th birthday of Dostoevsky