

32 Who am I?

I think, therefore I exist.

Descartes

I'm me, a woman, not being second-class citizens.

Lucy Stone [114]

All, it all started with him.

With wonderful and dazzling but tired

and fragile person. This was the experience.

Marguerite Duras

That's how it happens. You have a headache, you want to howl from the pain or go crazy...

I'm not a heartless woman, but I'm not crazy. "Scream of the butterfly" was re-released, and I advertised the book, traveled to universities to meet with young readers, who organized Dan and Godfather. At these meetings, had to answer different questions. From the male part of the audience often heard: "Tell me, Nicky, and you have agreed to perform a Striptease?" And the students were mainly interested in the topic "Are women second-class beings?" or "What feminists achieve?".

Arriving at the campus Fudena, I briefly lay down on the lawn, looked at the sky and thought about the Tiana-Tiana.

Jose married ay, dick, an artist who was younger than her eight years. The wedding took place three months and twenty days after the funeral of a Tian-Tian. It seems that only I remember about it.

The wedding ceremony was held at the Art gallery of Lawrence in Fuxing Park and was timed to the opening of the exhibition of paintings of the groom. There were tons of guests - foreigners and Chinese - and even Madonna. In a sign of reconciliation, she generously gave the newlyweds a generous gift - each gold omega watch. After all, in the end, ay dick always liked her more than others.

I barely talked to her. Between us was sudden and alienation. Maybe she didn't tell Tian-Tian, she may not be specially catered to his friends, addicts, drawn him back. But I never wanted to be close to her.

At the wedding was too crowded. I was out of breath. And left early.

From Germany flow were emails from Mark and Shamir. I told them about the death of Tian-Tian. Wrote that now almost calmed down, because the novel was nearing completion, and the best way to honor the memory of Tian-Tian and could not be.

Shamir invited me to Germany, as soon as I finish the novel. "It will help you through the pain of loss. Come to see the spires of our cathedrals, the Black forest, carefree crowd of townspeople. Sure, mark is also looking forward to your arrival".

Mark came a long electronic message. He in detail described your business, travel, and quarrel with his wife. I don't know what led him to such revelations. Maybe a woman, composing novels, unwittingly inspires the trust of others because of his knowledge of human nature. Even if she stole your wedding ring with sapphire, which is now always flaunts her big toe.

I decided to go to Berlin right after Halloween. I like this festival: its inherent spirit of romance, violence fantasies to hide the pain under a mask and pretend someone else, escaping from the stinking breath of death.

Before I left I finished unpacking. Folded the manuscript, straightened up the apartment. I was going to move in with parents, so it was necessary to give Connie the keys. There still remained things of Tian-Tian. I took one of his self portraits, favorite collection of poems by Dylan Thomas and a white shirt, which he liked.

Shirt still bore the scent of his body. I hid her face in the folds of the fabric, inhaling the bitter aroma of a forever lost happiness.

Was the end of the week. I've been walking in the shade of the umbrella trees along the streets of Hengshan, then turned in memorable I the alley. That Spanish restaurant Connie. All around a bright light, the flowers cast on the walls of a fancy shadow for the revival and bustle, a lot of smart dressed people. When I came closer, I began to hear the final chords of a love song and the restrained, polite applause.

I climbed the stairs and asked an employee where the hostess is. He led me through a Suite of rooms there, where, surrounded by a large group of visitors stood carefully painted Connie. She was in evening toilet strapless, slicked back hair was pulled into a tight beam. On the lips a thick layer of bright lipstick saturated colors. As always attractive, graceful and stately, like a crane.

The singing and guitar is a beautiful young Spanish couple in black concert embroidered with pearls costumes performed a dance to the fiery Latin American rhythms. The gentleman lightly touched the thighs of the partner, and they spun in a whirlwind of mind-boggling intricate movements. Connie spoke with the gray-haired gentleman. She turned and noticed me. When finished talking, politely bowed and approached me.

How are you, honey? - sympathetically she asked, warmly hugging me.

I smiled and nodded.

- As always, you look great, I said, pulling from her purse a bunch of keys and handing it to her. I told her about my plans on the phone.

A little awkwardly, she silently took the keys.

- Still can't understand... how could this happen. What is my fault? What God has done this to me? Well, okay. Let's leave it. You're a smart girl. Take care of yourself!

We kissed good-bye. Approached Juan, too, warmly embraced me.

"Goodbye," I waved to them and left. Music and dancing continued, but I no longer had anything to

do with this.

Downstairs in the courtyard I ran into an elderly white man and a grey-haired woman with glasses. She was like a Professor's wife. I have several times apologized for his awkwardness, but she didn't even look in my direction, and an energetic step toward the entrance to the restaurant. The doorman swiftly closed wrought iron door in her face. An elderly woman tried to enter, but the door wouldn't budge. And then the old woman burst into a loud cursing.

- You goddamned witch, she-devil! Ten years ago you killed my son. But that wasn't enough! Now, you slew my beloved grandson. You have black heart! I curse you: may you flatten the asphalt on the first machine as soon as you get out of this infernal den!

She screamed with rage. I froze, suddenly realizing who this angry old woman. I met her for the first time.

She never appeared at the funeral of a Tian-Tian, but perhaps Connie just forbade her to see him. She always mortally afraid of and avoid this woman. However, the grandmother Tian-Tian knew where the restaurant is.

The doorman politely tried to reason with her.

- Madame, you have come here for the tenth time. At your age it's not worth the bother! Better go back home and rest!

- Hmm, muttered the old woman, glaring about. I'm not going to shut my mouth. Let them not imagine that she was able to buy my silence for a miserable pittance, a pension of one hundred yuan. I demand to be told the truth. Let me explain.

She again started to Bang on the heavy door. I rushed to her and caught her arm.

"Grandma," I said carefully. - Let me help you home. And it's going to rain soon.

She incredulously looked at me, then looked at the sky, covered by a dense veil of lead, sometimes crimson with reflections of the city lights at night.

And with the age-old suspicion quietly asked:

- Who are you?

His heart ached from the sudden surge of tenderness and bitterness. I stood like one distraught, and did not know what to answer this tortured and helpless old lady...

And really, who am I? Who?...

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