

ANASTASIA
KUZNETSOVA

JEAN BATIST
BUTERA

FIRE

SMOLDERING
UNDER WATER



Anastasia Kuznetsova

Fire Smoldering Under Water

«Издательские решения»

Kuznetsova A.

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This event was expected! The book about people's stories and psychological traumas written by authors who had personal experiences themselves and now work with it. Russian psychologist Anastasiya Kuznetsova and Belgian psychotherapist Jean Batist Butera tell about the most intimate without any fantasy and censorship. The frankness in the narration of their own suffering from distressing life experiences is unique! The person is born for creation and joy and tragedies can't stop it.

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Содержание

Prologue	6
In Third and First Person	6
Chapter 1. Descendants of Mediums	10
African Poacher's Son	10
Black Caviar Sandwich	17
Chapter 2. Angel's Death	26
Goldfish Broth	26
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	31

Fire Smoldering Under Water

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Prologue

In Third and First Person

Each of us has their own mission. This is the Book of Life consisting of two volumes.

In the first volume it is written how this mission is manifested from the moment of our birth.

This cannot be changed. The first volume's pages are made of ashes, which we have been and which we will become. It contains a description of conditions and circumstances of the beginning of our life journey:

In which particular country and in which family we are born. With what abilities and appearances. With what health, physical as well as mental. With what propensities and perception. All these being unchangeable and predetermined.

The second volume contains a set of probabilities. Its pages are made of standard white paper. It is written there what we have come into this world for. And for each one something personal is written there.

Someone can become a doctor and devote their life to rescue people's lives. Some can become a teacher or a police officer, or a factory worker, or can just give people good in all its manifestations.

And someone's destiny is to become a drug addict or a criminal. Or to spend the whole life on a couch looking at the world through a TV screen and never enjoy the taste of that special pleasure, which arises in the course of a rewarding service to people.

Each person has their own option with regards to all possible forms of manifesting creativeness and destructiveness.

In the second volume of the Book of Life everything is predetermined. All possible probabilities of emanations for our existence.

But there is a special circumstance. The truth is, that the white paper pages are inscribed with a graphite pencil. This is a rough copy. Sometimes there are mistakes in a rough copy...

This is a special style of communications between the Creator and his creatures.

If individuals just follow their fate not trying to get to the core of their lives' script and to change it if necessary – they live according to the rough copy. And then, in the process of living their life, the vessel of their soul is filled with dirt of negative emotions. Because they are not aware of the main gift given to them for their existence.

The Supreme Being, in his own image and likeness, has put in each of us a particle of himself. There is a particle of God in each of us.

But even the brightest beam of light from the star called the Sun can not break through the darkness of night. Such is the nature of the universe.

We can exercise control over our own DNA and heal ourselves with the help of feelings and the strength of faith.

Create eternal beauty in a creative manifestation of art whatever it is.

We can safeguard peace and also can destroy every living thing around us in a matter of minutes.

We have been given great power and great responsibility. Each of us. Without exceptions.

The Supreme Being has put in our fingers the key to the house, in which the world is filled with love. He even has brought us to the appropriate door, knowing that people look but do not see. We only have to insert the key in the keyhole and turn it. How incredibly hard it is to do it sometimes...

There are some soul traumas in each individual's life. This is a natural way of soul evolution. Living with and overcoming sufferings – this is an inherent challenge in the formation of spirituality. But we do not have a culture of going through a trauma; we reject the very possibility of such a situation.

We are the modern, developed society of human civilization. We have forgotten the culture and the traditions of our ancestors who knew how to deal with death. And knew how to deal with life. And knew how to separate one from the other.

Psychological traumas appear to be different.

For example, when confronted with the betrayal of a loved one, we start to delve into a deep disappointment, to seek for a possible reason, to be torn between resentment and guilt.

Why?

In fact, the world differs from our vision of it. And only the strength of our faith turns our vision into reality. And so it is. Subject to one small but fundamental remark.

Your life's faith should concern yourself only.

Other people shall have the right not to participate in it.

And if you put your faith in another person and they do not meet your expectations, this error is yours. And only yours.

Or when you lose someone you love, someone who is infinitely dear to your heart. And you feel like your life has lost all its meaning.

The woe becomes unbearable.

But we come into this world alone and we die alone. This life is only yours.

All other people are just travel companions regardless of how dear they are to your heart. Who told you that you have the right to abandon your only mission – your own life?

Traumas appear to be different. You may get a diagnosis, with which you will have to die. Or to carry on somehow. In spite of. Or because of. Now this is your choice.

All that matters is the love which lives within you. Love of life. Love of God. Love of your family. Love and gratitude. For a chance given to you – to exist. Regardless of the circumstances and conditions, those are inscribed on white paper pages with a graphite pencil of fate.

Because this is a rough copy. And you can rewrite it. As did the two people who wrote this book and who were able to rewrite the rough copies of their own destinies...

...It was a wonderful autumn evening. In downtown St. Petersburg, near the building of the institute named after Bekhterev, there was a conversation between two psychologists, two scientists, two people who worked with psychological traumas. They came to an international conference on hypnosis – he arrived from Belgium, she came from Moscow. They were practitioners in the complicated science, which deals with human woe. Practitioners in the literal sense of this word.

Perhaps, this was the only thing they had in common. In all other respects they presented an example of colorfully illustrated dualism. Furthermore, when God decided to introduce them to each other he was in high spirits.

God has a sophisticated sense of humor.

Sometimes it is barely noticeable.

Belgian psychiatrist Jean Batist had arrived to Russia to exchange experience with his Russian colleagues. What features stood out absolutely about Jean Batist, were the black color of his skin and his snow-white smile. He was a strong built, silver-haired African with a keen glance and soft voice. Born in Rwanda, as the best student, he had been sent to study in Moscow, where he got medical education. While studying in Moscow Jean Batist had met his future wife, who loved him all her life as only Russian women were able to love – with passion, understanding, with unconditional love of the queen to her king as well as with great food, which even Michelin chefs would not be able to cook. Because the most delicious food for our body as well as for our soul is based on love. He was a happy man, whom his beloved woman had presented with beautiful children, who, in their turn, had already delighted Jean Batist with grandchildren.

His path of life had brought him to Belgium, where he worked as a psychiatrist in a clinic. Jean Batist worked with various patients as he believed that it was necessary to help everyone regardless of their convictions. He reasoned as a psychiatrist, as a doctor. In his work he had a lot of patients

with trauma as well as with PTSD – post-traumatic stress disorder. Jean Batist helped people to go through the death of loved ones and to survive when a particle of their own personality was dead.

Until death came to him.

Oncology.

For a long while death whispered in his ear the words of consolation, calling for humility and acceptance of the dogma that both life and death were God's Providence.

And that the necessity of humility was obvious.

But Jean Batist's hearing had always been mediocre.

And he had survived...

Anastasia, for the first time in several years after defending her thesis, was able to leave her private practice for the sake of communicating with her foreign colleagues within the frames of the international conference. The amount of work was so large, that her dream of professional self-fulfillment had become a reality long time ago. Tall, slender, with green eyes. With blond hair emphasizing her light skin, with a special gaze inconsistent with the youth of her soul. Anastasia had found herself in Moscow thanks to her aspiration for self-improvement and had gained a scientific degree at the best chair of psychology in the country. She had admirable children and a wonderful mother, and they filled each moment of her life with absolute and unconditional happiness.

Anastasia conducted a private practice of a psychologist-hypnotherapist, developed her own proprietary methods, pursued research of the effect of hypnotherapy on self-regulation of a human being.

She was guided by some special principles, not popular among her colleagues. Anastasia never worked with people whom she did not like in moral and ethic terms. But those, whom she started working with, she never left alone in any life situations. Anastasia helped people to get over a loss, to go through a betrayal, to be up and about again after a serious illness, to resolve a situation of domestic violence, to get out of an existential crisis, to stop on the edge of an abyss.

Because she had stood on the edge of an abyss herself.

And not just once.

And she knew that if you tried to look into the abyss – the abyss might look into you so as to drink the last drops of your mind in the very bottom depths of your unconsciousness.

And Anastasia knew this look well.

But the abyss could not find her bottom.

And she had survived...

...In St. Petersburg they agreed that they would definitely meet in Brussels. And would jointly carry out a supervision of the cases from their practices of dealing with traumas. And would write a book about it. For all those people who had survived some trauma. And for all the rest who had not faced it yet, but who would definitely have to face it in future.

So that this book could become knowledge for different people of how to go through a woe and a loss, medical disorder and fear of death, violence and loss of life fundamentals, which in many cases were composed of other people, whom we entrusted with our own lives.

How to learn to live after a childhood psychological trauma. How to adapt to devastating realities of an adult life, when people lose their health, business, lose themselves. And what the life could be after a psychological trauma.

At that time nobody could assume that in the process of working on this book, based on the stories of their clients, they would decide to tell about their own traumas which they had got over. To tell the whole truth.

He – as a Belgian.

As a psychiatrist.

As a man.

She – as a Russian.

As a psychologist.

As a woman.

And they had met. And the book about life's psychological traumas, co-authored by those who worked with such traumas and who had got over them, was written. In an unusual format of artistic narration in third and in first person. Because when we stand in front of a mirror we can only see as much as the amalgam allows us to see. And it does not matter where this mirror is located – in a bathroom or in the depths of our souls.

Chapter 1. Descendants of Mediums

African Poacher's Son

Little Jean Batist was running so fast that the wind, swelling the lungs as a sail, interrupted his breathing.

He was 7 years old. He ran with his head down watching each step carefully, viewing the splitting jungle wilderness on the run. Jean Batist was in a hurry to get back before the sunset.

The sunset on the equator was early – it was already dark at 6 pm. And then wild animals went out for hunting. He had to run to make it home in time. But yesterday while running his 11 kilometers home from school he did not meet the snake. That was not good. It meant that they might meet today. And he would lose precious time.

Rwanda or as they also call it “Land of a thousand hills” is covered with subtropical forest. Lake Kivu being the most beautiful of the African Great Lakes, the waters of which are free from crocodiles that live in all the other bodies of water, and the banks of which are inhabited by 2 million people, amazes with its authentic beauty.

In the period of Jean Batist's childhood the Rwandese Republic, located between Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Zaire, was different. Only 4 million people lived there. But until now, after civilization has come to this African country and its population has increased to 11 million people in just some 50 years, Rwanda is still considered to be a paradise on Earth. During the year the air temperature remains around 25 degrees Celsius. The harvest which is reaped several times a year has an excellent taste.

Local residents are engaged in agriculture and hunting. Nobody rushes to the palaces of education. Because intermittent wars and life on land do not assume that children would leave their families for a long road of education. But half a century ago, when two tribes of Tutsi and Hutu had already been at war with each other, creating a semblance of a relative peace, Jean Batist's parents had made a decision that all five of their children should go to school, though only Jean proved to be able to study.

It was not easy.

At that time there were only 15 hospitals for the whole country and 95 percent of the population was illiterate. Jean Batist's parents could not write or read as well as actually everyone else in the area – there was no need for that. Other values made these people's lives replete and happy:

- To get up at dawn with the first lights of equatorial sun.
- To reap a harvest working 12 hours a day, seven days a week.
- To go hunting successfully trying to avoid to be killed by wild animals.
- To cook and eat fresh food as the food can only be freshly cooked – there is no place to store it.
- To relax in the evening with dances and freshly brewed banana beer by the fire, in a big friendly company.
- To sing a lullaby to a baby.
- To listen to a medium, the tribe's voodoo, who was Jean Batist's grandfather and who revealed to people amazing mysteries of predictions.
- To kill a snake.

Among the country's population of 4 million people only very few kids could become elementary school pupils. After 7 years of elementary school, even less kids used to progress to the secondary school which lasted for 6 years.

There was no need for that. It was much more important to continue carrying out their father's work: to work on land, raise cattle or to learn the trade of hunting.

Jean Batist's age mates who were 7 years old got up at dawn to clean the barn from cows' and goats' dung and then went to help at the banana plantations. For the sake of attending school Jean Batist's father relieved him of other work. So in the morning the boy just cleaned the barn and then ran to school.

This was difficult but his father could afford it. He was a poacher from Hutu tribe, and at his banana plantation worked the Rwandans from Tutsi and Hutu tribes, who needed money and who could dig the ground. Jean Batist's father could not. He was a mine worker. And after work at the mine he hunted wild animals and buffaloes.

When Jean reached the age of 7, he was sent to school. The only one of all the families who lived in the area. It was 11 kilometers to his school. Every day little Jean Batist ran the distance of 22 kilometers.

He ran only because if he walked he would not make it to school on time in the morning, by the time the classes began. As well as he would not manage to be back in the evening before the sunset, before the moment when wild animals went out for hunting. By running he saved time to study and managed to survive. But he had one problem – not to miss a snake.

The parents told their children since childhood:

– If you see a snake – you should kill it. If you do not kill it – the snake will kill you. Or somebody else. A snake has to be killed.

That is why when he saw a snake he stopped. He knew that a deadly black mamba bite was too fast. And he had to react in time.

Black mamba, reaching a length of 4 meters, is notable for the speed of its movement. It can move with a speed of 15 kilometers per hour. Jean Batist was a child of an elementary school age, his speed could not exceed 10 kilometers per hour, and so he could just watch how a black snake dissolves and disappears in the jungle. In such a case he did not even slow down the speed of his running. As this made no sense.

He was strictly prohibited to go inside the jungle by his father, who used to say that the jungle fed the first and killed the second to feed the first. And children had nothing to do there.

And so Jean Batist kept on running. He was a skilful long-distance runner and preferred not to stop without an urgent need, but only to change the intensity of his run.

So he ran without stopping. Until he met a black ribbon on the road. Then he had to act to the most of his abilities as a child.

But Jean Batist was a son of a hunter, of a poacher. His ancestors' blood was in his genes. The blood of those who had survived because they were faster than death. And he used to grab its tail with a proven movement, to lift it up with a sharp jerk and to hit its head on the ground at full force. Then he hit it again and again. Until the intense and solid flesh of a deadly reptile turned into just limp remains of a legless animal, with a thin, largely stretched body, without movable eyelids.

Many years later, when the tribes of Tutsi and Hutu started to fight for power and the war broke out with Tutsi genocide, in which about a million people were killed, Jean Batist would see how this method of killing poisonous reptiles worked for his own countrymen.

Warriors from the tribe of Hutu annihilated Tutsi with extreme cruelty, sparing nobody. Tutsi soldiers from the patriotic front, who attacked Rwanda, also annihilated every Hutu they met on their way.

They killed children like snakes.

They killed infants in an absolutely terrifying way. They took kids by a leg and hit hard against the ground or a solid object. They hit them until the brains started to flow from a small skull. After that they threw the babies together with their parents in the waters of the Nile to be eaten by huge – five meter long, with the weight of six or seven hundred kilograms – crocodiles-cannibals, which destroyed the bodies in a matter of minutes.

War is always devastatingly disgusting.

But one still had to survive until a war.

It was like that during all seven years of the elementary school. Until Jean Batist had advanced to a secondary school. The education was stationary and the parents had sent their son for another six years to live in a relative analogue of a college. It was when Jean Batist had already turned 13 years of age, that they have bought him the first pair of shoes in his life.

He tried to do his best. Realizing how many hopes his parents associated with his education, Jean Batist, having a natural curiosity and an inquiring mind, demonstrated remarkable achievements in his studies.

The experience gained from the men of his family – his grandfather-medium and his father-poacher – and piled in a neat sandwich with new sciences, had produced a striking contrast.

Jean Batist knew no fear.

To be more exact, he demonstrated some special state, which could be characterized as a rejection of fear. This helped in everyday life as well as in socialization with his peers. From his grandfather-medium he had got a developed intuition as well as an insight. He always felt what the other person had in mind. And as the years went by it became more and more interesting for him to learn the mechanism of functioning of this strange system called the brain. He kept remembering the incident, which occurred to him when he still was at the elementary school and which affected his whole life, becoming probably his determining factor in choosing a profession.

It was the second year of his running to school. Once, when he ran in being a little late after killing another snake, Jean Batist was surprised to find out that there were no classes. All the children had been gathered in a big classroom where there were unknown people in white coats. The children were vaccinated. Jean Batist had never been vaccinated before. But he already knew that a doctor was a being close to God. The most kind, the most compassionate being in the world. This was what his parents always said. This was what everybody around said. And he lived in an absolute awareness of this truth.

When a doctor in a white coat came to him, he started to watch happily and curiously how he would be vaccinated for the first time in his life. The doctor came closer and roughly grabbed Jean Batist's forearm to turn his back. Before he could resent in surprise, Jean Batist felt the syringe needle entered his shoulder blade and the fire broke out in his body. It happened so quickly that the next moment he was screaming something through tears to the back of the retreating doctor in a white coat. Severe pain entered his shoulder blade as a burning flow, and the worst of all was that this pain started to increase. Lurching from a sudden coming fatigue, he felt the trembling in his weakened legs and wanted to lie down right on the classroom floor.

But the fire greedily devouring the little body was so unbearable that in his last effort, lurching, he got out and ran.

He wanted to cool his body and he ran faster and faster so that the wind blowing from the run could bring some relief.

Thus, not seeing anything around from the pain, he ran until he got home.

Catching the sight of his home he started to slow down and then, already losing his consciousness, slowly sat down in the shade of a tree behind the house. Leaning back against the familiar trunk of the oil palm tree he sat there till dark, wiping away bitter tears of resentment and broken illusions.

This old oil palm tree was his secret friend. He used to come to it sometimes just to worry about something, turning over in his hands the dry leaves, which covered the ground around. Or dreamed about something, slowly touching the amazing bark of this tree. The tree, which had so much changed the life of the whole mankind.

Many years later, already pursuing science, Jean Batist would find out what a catastrophe had struck the whole planet in connection with this ordinary tree, from which the palm oil was produced.

The thing was that for getting this highly profitable product large areas of tropical forest were cut down every day.

The areas of the size of 300 football fields.

Per day.

Every day.

Until no more forests were left in several countries as well as the animals that once inhabited them. And the zone with the “greenhouse effect” had appeared over the territories of Indonesia and Malaysia, killing our planet.

He would find out that probably this particular product had played its role in a very short life span of his countrymen. Men seldom survived the upper limit of 65 years. And, as it had been proven, the amount of saturated fats of palm oil used in foods directly led to death, caused by a cardiovascular disease and a coronary heart disease.

And he would give up everything, which comprised palm oil, for the sake of his children’s lives and for the sake of saving the planet. And he would often think that if people realized the full horror of the disaster, which they brought closer with their own hands with every purchased product, food or perfume, drink or detergent – they would certainly give it up.

Forever.

When there is no demand, supply disappears.

And it would become possible to save this planet, which had been dying for a long time because of the devil of avarice of those, who believed that there were some pockets in the personal coffins for them and their children.

When his tears dried, Jean Batist who had already gone through a whole kaleidoscope of emotions, made up his mind. He would never forgive this person in a white coat.

Never.

For the pain.

For his rudeness.

For turning his back in response to the cry for help.

For the cruelty, which could not be natural for the one who knew the mystique of life and death.

For all the disappointment.

And he also made a decision that by all means he would become a doctor. In order to never cause pain to anybody. To become a real doctor and to help people with an open heart, looking into their eyes.

The time had passed. The results of Jean Batist’s education pleased his parents as well as his teachers. He drew the attention of his physics teacher – a monk from the congregation of catholic monks. They became friends. Monks with the mission of education or just with a kind human attitude had accompanied Jean Batist his entire life.

When the time came to go to university, the congregation of catholic monks helped Jean Batist, as one of the best students, to join the education program in Russia. Thus he got to Moscow, to the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia named after Patrice Lumumba. He came to Russia with a distinctive objective of getting a high quality medical education and to come back to his homeland, to Africa, to serve people. To become a monk and to dedicate his life to medicine.

But often love of God cannot withstand a competition from the love of a woman.

– Damn it! – it was long since this had become Jean Batist’s favorite expression in Russian. – I don’t know what to do. Deeply confused he was sitting in front of a monk, in front of his former physics teacher, in front of his friend.

– All these years I wanted to become a monk so much that I did not look at any woman at all. Until she appeared. I don’t know what I should do! And I ask you, my teacher, to help me. I will do as you say.

The monk kept silence for a long while. Then he slowly began to explain in detail the things that at first glance were very obvious truths. But, as it turned out, only at first glance. This was a very long conversation. But Jean Batist had remembered its main and fundamental essence for his whole life.

We are all people made of flesh and blood. And it does not matter if we are monks or ordinary people living worldly lives.

It does not matter what we believe in.

And if we believe at all.

We are animals. This is our biological nature. And as any living organism we do react. We have feelings and emotions. We experience them in a natural way and cannot have a full control over them. The strongest feelings are Faith and Hate. Having the absolute faith a person is capable of almost anything. Even of giving their own lives. Having the absolute hate a person can take lives of others.

And when a human being meets a person, to whom he or she develops biological attraction and emotional attachment, we call it love.

Love of a person – is the highest emotion which is called a feeling and is peculiar to human beings only. As all the other highest emotions, love is a specific psychological state, which shows itself in a long-term and stable worrying about the object of love.

The feeling of love can be different depending on the object of love. Love of parents, love of children, love of a man or a woman, of work or pets, of reading or traveling – all of these are different manifestations of this highest emotion. That is why feelings are often classified according to subject areas. The last being divided into moral and ethical as well as intellectual, practical. This is very simple, as simple as an alphabet.

Love of God is not an emotion. And even not a feeling. It is called a true love because it cannot be demonstrated in the morning or in the evening. It does not depend on a season or a life situation. This unconditional love is a part of activities of a human being.

Love of God is a state. As breathing, for example. Breathing may become uneven when we worry. Or quiet and deep when we sleep. It may be different. Furthermore. Particularly the sound of our breathing is the main sound indicating that we are alive. Love of God is like this.

And it does not matter if you are a monk or a worldly person. The main thing is that you breathe.

Jean Batist had cherished forever the memories of that sleepless night, which he spent thinking after his conversation with the monk. Soon he married the woman he loved, and he spent the rest of his life in a close cooperation with monks who revealed for him this amazing insight into life.

After graduation from the university Jean Batist came back to Rwanda with his Russian wife. They built a beautiful house. His wife was surprised by a mild sub-equatorial climate, without heat or cold. They reaped harvest in their garden several times a year. There were no mosquitoes on the shore of a boundless scenic lake Kivu, where they used to come for vacation. Sunsets and sunrises boggled the imagination with their unusual splendor peculiar only to the equator.

There is almost no twilight at the equator. An absolute day starts to be filled with red, lilac, pink colors, the solar disk dives beyond the skyline and an absolute night falls. All of a sudden. As if somebody turns off the day light and turns on a night light of an endless starry sky. This world resembled a piece of paradise created for a family's well-being. Nature generously rewarded every day of the year with the wealth of all the benefits, which it was able to give.

Together with his wife, a nurse, Jean Batist served the patients in the clinic and worked on his thesis. The time when we are absolutely happy is like a wave of eyelashes. We do not notice it. Soon their life got filled with children's voices, their family happiness obtained the perfection of great creation of a great artist, and a war came to Rwanda.

Genocide of 1994 claimed the lives of a million people. Jean Batist's father and brothers were killed. Rivers of blood were running through the city and corpses of the people hacked to death with machete closed the exits from houses. Jean Batist was forced to flee the country to save his family.

Again he had got help from the congregation of monks. Jean's wife and children were first taken to one of the West African countries, then to Belgium. In Belgium they had to start everything from scratch. In the literal sense of the word.

Russian degree in medicine was not valid in Belgium and he had to study again. To study again to be a doctor. But there was no money, so only one of them could study to be a doctor. His wife stayed at home with the children in a housing provided by social services.

Everything was unfamiliar. Unfamiliar country, unfamiliar language, unfamiliar people.

They just had to survive.

And they were surviving.

It took 4 years to validate his qualifications. The congregation of monks helped in this situation as well. They provided Jean Batist with an opportunity to work at their psychiatric hospital. Monks in many countries of the world opened medical institutions for working with psychiatric patients as well as with deaf and blind persons. This was their mission. And this allowed Jean Batist to find a work for that long period when he studied again. Even after he had obtained the official status of a doctor-psychiatrist in Belgium, he continued to work at the neuropsychiatric hospital of St. Martin on the outskirts of Brussels.

For a long time the horrors of war still echoed in the memories of all the members of Jean Batist's family. But time moves space, and in a while the professional self-fulfillment of Jean Batist started to develop successfully as he used his life experience in working with PTSD – post-traumatic stress disorder – applying this experience to treating the people who had gone through a war.

Psychological traumas – is a special subject studied by psychotherapists. Jean Batist was not a supporter of a human body's exposure to pharmaceuticals.

According to his long-term observations, it was quite obvious to him that a trans state in hypnotherapy was more qualitative by its nature than antidepressant drugs. Certainly not in every case, but in the cases related to mental health – for sure.

When mentally healthy people go through traumas, it is not necessary at all to introduce chemical elements into a body to exercise a forced control over people's mental state.

Our unconsciousness – is that specific particle of God inside us. And this inner God is open to professional conversation. A psychotherapist always has a choice. To make a pharmaceutical company richer or to find the right words for a conversation.

Of course, it is easier to prescribe drugs. Substantially easier, as compared to that enormous work of the mind and soul, which is required to be done for the sake of a patient.

But Jean Batist liked what he was doing with all his heart and the more complicated the cases were, the more he committed himself to this amazing skill of curing human souls.

The children grew up, his son was going to apply to college and his daughter was graduating from a secondary school. Finally they got an opportunity to give up social housing, to take a loan and to build their own house.

Their own new house. Now each member of the family had their own room and in the evening they all could gather in the nice and comfortable living room with a beautiful fireplace made of red bricks. Only 3 years were left till the final payment to the bank. And the house would become theirs, at last.

And in this new country, in this new life, after all the ordeals of war, finally they would be able to obtain peace and to live happily ever after.

But one morning he realized that he was dying.

Jean Batist kept silence. Long ago they have agreed with Anastasia, that they would tell their own stories as well as the stories of their patients in third and first person.

This was fair.

– Jean Batist, do you mind if we get out into the garden and I have a smoke? – Anastasia realized that they needed a break. They were sitting near that particular fireplace of red bricks, where the fire was burning brightly.

– Damn it! Of course! I will breath your menthol, – exclaimed Jean Batist, smiling, as if this was exactly what he was waiting for. – You know, I will probably suggest the following. How about now you tell me how you lived. And then we will get back to my trauma. OK?

– No problem! – Anastasia took long menthol sticks out of a cigarette case, and they went out to the terrace, to the night garden filled with a citrus scent of lemon grass.

Black Caviar Sandwich

A pack of huge stray dogs surrounded her from all sides. She had to walk through the wasteland, which had a bad reputation.

For a 13 year old girl it was better to walk accompanied by somebody. And she was accompanied. As if unknown powers of her Guardian Angel took very unexpected shapes.

Until she reached the age of majority, if she walked through dark streets of the city or through a wasteland between her home and her school, a large pack of stray dogs, led by a huge white dog, appeared out of nowhere. Wild dogs just ran alongside. And she felt that these free animals, that built up horror throughout the area, in some mysterious way protected her. The pack leader often looked into her eyes. And she looked back. Also with courage and confidence. But she never looked away first. By this age, seriously keen on studying animal psychology, she got to know the principle of a pack.

If you withstand a direct look – you earn respect.

The principle of a stronger one.

It is much simpler with animals.

They do not know how to lie.

Anastasia was born in Kazakhstan, on the shores of the Caspian Sea, where her parents had been assigned to work after their graduation from the university. Only in a month after her birth she was already flying in an airplane to her second homeland, to her grandparents, to the North Caucasus.

Thus she spent her childhood – between a desert with camels, at a seashore, from one side, and the authentic culture of the green mountains of Alanya, from the other. This paradoxical reality had influenced her perception of the world since her childhood.

Later, when her secondary school started, her parents moved to Volga. The southern city was alien to her in all its manifestations. All 20 years, which she spent in it, she wanted to move away. She still spent every summer in the North Caucasus and only there she felt at home. Summer storms with blasts of thunder and lightning, which hit the whole sky and made even stones in the mountains tremble, caused her to feel delight and admiration.

As well as all other natural elements, however.

She felt that some ancient, archaic energy of these powerful natural forces caused a response in her soul. In every cell of her blood, body, mind, soul. As if something inside her was like bottomless water well. And those ancient natural elements filled this deep water well with some specific life force. Unlike anything else. With the force of the Joy of Life.

It was like this when she, being a seven year old girl, came to the sea for the first time. It was that rare summer when she did not go to the Caucasus for all three months. And she went to the sea with her father. Severe storms happened at the Caspian Sea even in summer time. And now she just looked at huge waves that rose to the sky and soaked up the coastal sand in its total power. Her father took her hand and asked:

– Would you like to catch a wave, little sparrow?

– Yes, – she said, blinking with delight.

And they stepped into the sea. Her father firmly held her hand and led her toward the waves. The waves were high. The first big wave covered not only her but her father as well. When they came to the surface again she realized that she would never learn to swim. But she would always step into the stormy sea. Because from that moment the sea had become her friend. And for the first time she felt this sea waves' energy, which was not like anything in the world.

Much later, when she became an adult, she had come to realize that there was no sense in learning to swim, as swimming in such a stormy sea was a complete folly. And to swim in a quite

sea was not interesting, it was boring. Because sleeping natural elements were like a chrysalis of a butterfly – nothing remarkable, just an intermediate stage.

She preferred to look at an even sea from the shore.

As well as at a restless rain. Or at softly falling snowflakes. Or at a fire burning in a fireplace, limited by an air draft. To look before going to sleep, listening to a lullaby of nature.

Anastasia grew up in 1990s, which was a complicated period for Russia. It was the time, when the white house building was attacked in Moscow and a coup d'état took place. When the power in the country began to belong to organized gangs, and a person could be killed for no reason, just for the sake of practicing to fire a gun. Chaos reigned in the country and everyone was on their own. And it was a lot to go through and there were many roads to take.

Despite the fact that she had never loved this southern city, this was where Anastasia became a person and her profession was chosen.

Unlike most young people, she began to do what had been determined by her fate, after many twists and turns that had occurred in her life up to a certain moment. And only after breathing in this world for a quarter of a century, she had opened the door to her true destiny and had entered the space of professional self-fulfillment. Until that time she had just tried to survive as did many other people of the great country, which had got into the meat grinder of the 1990s.

When she was 18 she met her future husband. They got married and soon they found out that they would become happy parents. One day Anastasia left the apartment where the young family lived and went to visit her parents. Their houses stood next to each other, but it was dangerous to come back alone late at night. Her husband insisted that she should stay with her parents.

But unfortunately...

To the great regret of her whole life, the knowledge which lived inside her was stronger than reasonableness. And that night her intuition told her, that she should leave her parents and come back home.

Her belly was quite big, as it should be in the 8th month of pregnancy. Anastasia returned home but could not open the door as her husband had chained it from the inside.

Through a small slit provided by the strained chain she could see a girl. The girl was completely naked and she laughed drunkenly when passing the slightly opened door. In her hands the girl held an opened bottle of champagne from which she was drinking, listening to an anecdote that someone was telling somewhere in the bedroom.

This someone, judging by his voice, was Anastasia's husband.

For a while Anastasia just stood there and looked into the emptiness of the apartment until she saw in the distance the edge of the baby cot, purchased recently for their future baby.

As in a slow motion, her emotions started to turn into a blasted bomb. Her breathing became frequent and intermittent.

At the moment when unnatural anger had almost raised from the depths of her inner world, the baby quickened in her belly.

The maternal instinct had instantly suppressed her emotions and Anastasia, her hands shaking, closed the door to the truth, the door which remained not fully opened.

Stepping out into the summer night, she walked slowly to her parents' house. It was around midnight. The road went through a poorly lit poplar alley, with a chain link fence on the sides. When she had already got halfway, she heard some sound behind her.

She turned around and faced a young man with a roving glance. He grabbed her hair hard and threw her back on the fence while pressing himself against her belly. With one hand he grabbed her left wrist and raised it above her head, pressing her into the fence.

Anastasia got a chance to see how he brought his other hand, in which he gripped a knife, close to her belly. She knew the meaning of this glance and of this smell, which made her nauseous.

Marijuana.

In those days marijuana grew in the streets absolutely free, just as an ordinary grass. This man was intoxicated by drugs. He buried his face in Anastasia's shoulder and was incoherently screaming out something about how nobody loved him, how he hated everybody and how he would pay all of them back.

Right now.

At that time Anastasia was not familiar with the psychology of a criminal, which she would start studying a few years later. She knew only one thing – her baby, her daughter, her little angel should be born in a month.

And a knife in the hands of a drug addict placed against her belly did not fit into the picture of the world at all. She had no time to recover from the shock of her husband's betrayal, and now she stood in front of a potential killer of her baby.

For some reason she had no thoughts about herself. As if at that moment she was just a bearer of a new life. Of the life, which should have come into being by all means.

And suddenly she felt a strange calm. She felt what she had to do.

Bypassing the mind, her intuition turned to the old structures of the brain and obtained a true knowledge.

Her hands stopped shaking.

Her breathing became even and deep.

Anastasia slowly raised her free hand and put it on the short-cut hair of the drug addict's head.

And she began to caress his head.

Cautiously.

Slowly.

Tenderly.

Sweetly.

Very sweetly.

Saying in a low, tender, calming voice:

– Oh, come on. It's OK! Of course, they love you.

They need you very much. What would they do without you?

Everything will be fine.

You are so wonderful. You are just tired. It happens. Everyone gets tired. And when you are tired – it is necessary to have a rest. Now you have to rest too.

And everything will be fine. Everything will be fine for sure.

...Time stopped.

It seemed to her that she was showing the great power of love and tenderness to an absolute evil and it took forever.

And the scales swung towards life.

The drug addict's body went limp, and Anastasia felt the weight of his head on her shoulder.

But he still kept his hand with the knife at her belly.

Through a thin fabric of her summer dress her skin felt the persistence of a metal tip.

Something had to be done. But she had already done all she could. And continued to do so, appealing to all supreme forces for help.

She did not know any prayers.

It was just like a radio transmitter started to operate inside her, sending an SOS signal.

And at that moment it was not important at all who would hear it.

A middle-aged married couple appeared at the other end of the alley. Strolling slowly before going to bed, a man and a woman walked arm in arm, unhurriedly talking about something.

Still caressing the drug addict's head, Anastasia waited till the couple came closer. In a calm but loud enough voice she asked:

– Excuse me, could you tell me what time is it now?

She had to attract attention.

And she succeeded.

The passers-by looked at them trying to understand what was going on. It was very unnatural how the drug addict kept her hand raised and pressed against the metal fence. From the outside it might arouse suspicions. The couple walked closer.

Now in a lower but more anxious voice Anastasia asked:

– Could you tell me the exact time? She finally caught the eye of the approaching passer-by, nodded in the direction of the knife, and the man looked there and stopped.

He saw a pregnant girl with a knife placed against her belly. At first he got confused. But he composed himself quickly and asked in a stern voice:

– And what is going on with you here?

The drug addict did not react to Anastasia's voice any more. Even when she addressed the passing couple, he was sort of daydreaming of something of his own. But when the man's question broke into his dreams, he came out of it. He turned around frightened and started to run away, out of the ally.

Anastasia felt how her legs became weak, and the people who ran up to her barely had time to catch her. They walked her to her parents' house, and her long-awaited baby was born prematurely, a month earlier than she expected.

Soon Anastasia left her husband. The newly born daughter was just 2 months old. Her parents, as many others, had not been paid their salaries for six months. In order to survive in that crazy mess of the 1990s, where an arbitrariness and criminal chaos reigned, she accepted her neighbor's offer, who used to take to Moscow fish eggs priced as a gold bar.

– Fish eggs? – asked Jean Batist puzzled, – what is that?

– It is black caviar. The caviar of sturgeon fish such as sturgeon, sevruga and beluga. Your father was a poacher. He hunted for animals. But there are some poachers who hunt for fish.

I used to buy caviar from the fishermen, who were poachers, and then to take it to Moscow to sell it there. It was a very dangerous and punishable criminal business. All of those, whom I worked with at that time, have been jailed.

But they did not manage to catch me.

Because I have found a way out.

The thing was that during a fishing season, when sturgeons used to go to spawn, the trains coming to Moscow were met by police cordons with police dogs. Only dogs could detect a smell of caviar packed in plastic or metal cans in a flow of people with bags.

Of course, those who carried caviar, were warned, for a cash consideration, by conductors while boarding the train. That meant that you should not take this train and should go the next day.

But in that world everyone made a profit from information. And sometimes conductors had been provided with false information. In such case smugglers were caught. For possession of black caviar they were not just put in jail, they would also get criminal sentences with a confiscation of all their property. The Criminal Code article was very serious.

And I was raising a daughter. And my parents had not been paid their salaries for many months. People tried to survive in any way they could. And I had no right to allow myself to be caught.

When I was 4, my parents taught me to read books and to play chess. Music, pictorial art, analytical reading. My school was great and I was a diligent student. And my mind came up with a solution to this problem with caviar. Unlike all the others, I just did not go till the final railway station in Moscow.

I used to make an agreement with the train driver and asked him to apply the so-called slow speed before the train reached the final station. And at a low speed of 20 kilometers per hour I just threw the bags with the cans of caviar on to the platform of the intermediate station that we were passing. And then I jumped myself.

– And the train kept moving? – Jean Batist was surprised.

– Of course, it kept moving! This was the whole point of the trick, – Anastasia laughed. – Yes, I used to jump from a moving train after throwing my bags. This was the only chance to avoid police cordons at the final railway station. After that I carried this caviar to several Moscow restaurants, with which prior arrangements had been made. I used to work like this.

Six months later, when I turned 19, I bought my first apartment. Only people who had no fear and with a propensity for risky ventures could survive at that time. Of course, I am not an obvious risk taker, but there is more than enough romanticism in me, – Anastasia smiled and continued.

And certainly, all this greatly influenced my subsequent choice of profession.

I have survived in the criminal environment, but I have not become the same as them.

I have entered their world, took what I needed and went away without looking back.

Later I began studying the psychology of a criminal, and my diploma at the institute was on this subject. Then it became obvious that I could solve complicated problems and could work with traumas. You know that sometimes this requires softness and sometimes extreme hardness. Over the years some professional pattern has been formed. But I chose an individual style of communicating with every person. Once my client called me a surgeon. He said that I had cut off his soul pain and sewed on a joy of life. I liked this metaphor.

Probably a work with a psychological trauma and its consequences can be acknowledged as a surgery in its essence. The existential manifestation of neurosurgery is a psychosurgery. Psychologist-surgeon opens the door to his office with a firm belief: we will cut off everything which is not necessary and will sew on everything which is needed.

There is an issue of anesthesia.

Sometimes it is contraindicative. And until a person goes through the whole event, which has caused the trauma, “right here and right now”, with the help of a specialist, they will not be able to get rid of it. But in most cases the anesthesia does work, a person drifts into a trans state and comfortably watches, by means of the inner vision, the images, which are born by unconsciousness through the imagination in response to the properly chosen words of the professional, who knows how and what to say to this particular person.

High quality psychotherapy can only be exclusive.

This is the first principle.

Sometimes, surgery has to be cruel. Because the patient has already learned how to live in pain and suffering after trauma. This has become more interesting for them. They continue to hold onto their negative memories. They feed their Egos. As well as their Alter Egos.

To the fullest.

Although by that moment there is already that stage of fatness, which does not allow them to move actively in the corners of their own consciousness.

And it is important to note that this is not a fast food. This is a special diet. Sufferings are fed with special viands of author’s cuisine.

For breakfast they usually prefer powerlessness plentifully seasoned with apathy. For lunch they serve a rare done uselessness and a fricassee out of the feeling of guilt. Dinner – as desired and to the one’s abilities. If with alcohol – anger is ideal as an aperitif and loneliness – as a digestive.

And voila!

Diet called “pseudo-depression” – at your service. Exactly like this. Because, as we know, depression is a psychiatric term meaning a mental pathology.

But people love this word so much! They really like to vibrate the space with the set of these letters: deepressiiionnn...

Between their own immorality and stupidity.

All these daily regimes and diets give importance to a trivial way of existence. They create a so-called “secondary gain” – a kind of unconscious advantage obtained as the result of destruction, giving

up on which would lead to a loss of any benefits for justifying your own laziness, lack of initiative and lack of discipline.

– What do you mean by that? – specified Jean Batist.

– I will explain it now. I will explain everything, which, in my opinion, is related to fundamental principles, – and Anastasia continued.

Laziness is an absolute evil. To overcome laziness one would need motivation, willpower and commitment to action. Problems begin when it becomes easier for a person not to think about this and to just live as a vegetable.

Lack of initiative is a failure to express individuality. Individuality can be expressed through a positive and creative action. But there is an obstacle of the behavioral strategy of “avoiding failures”, fears, low self-esteem and an external locus of control, when a person finds the cause of all the problems only in other people and in the prevailing circumstances. And this is irresponsibility.

And this is also a manifestation of a form of vegetative existence.

Laxity is a generally unacceptable format of livelihood. Laxity – this is about scrambled eggs and tomatoes: only the right tomatoes provide scrambled eggs with laxity. Laxity of tomatoes makes scrambled eggs lax. And what can be more tasty than lax scrambled eggs? But this is now about cooking, not about psychology.

We are what we believe in and what we do.

To be happy and to live a full life you have to be a fanatic. As defined in the dictionaries, fanaticism has only a negative meaning. Therefore, at the proper time I wrote a thesis on human subjectivity. The absolute faith mentioned there, inherent in fanaticism, had found its reflection in a form, which was more acceptable to the society. So, subjectivity is a person’s ability to creatively change internal and external reality. And to do it with a fanatic faith. Into their own mission.

Anastasia asked Jean Batist to open the window. The smell of blossoming jasmine flew into the room, and light coolness moved the air, echoing in the fireplace.

Anastasia was always glad to be a psychologist, not a psychiatrist. At a first consultation most of the people, who were her clients, showed one or another degree of insanity. From the existential point of view. What they did with their own lives, could not be defined in any other terms. In most cases these strange structures of destiny were based on the foundation of stupidity. Anastasia named it the eighth sin. It was followed by a weakness of spirit and a miserable existence thanks to that particular secondary gain. After them proudly marched the problem of the Ego – being either highly over-assessed or put below the groundwater level.

In many cases people successfully create their own problems themselves. And in this state, split into atoms, they come to the point, beyond which there is an abyss of despair. Sincerely blaming external factors for what happened to them. This generates a conclusion about the grounds, on which the foundation for the building named a “Problem” has been built.

The name for these grounds is “Irresponsibility”. Perhaps, if people were brought up bearing responsibility for their own lives, psychologists would have lost half of their clients.

But this is utopia.

In reality at their first appointment people show a certain degree of insanity, as they come to a psychologist for a magic pill. You take a magic pill – and there is no problem. Clients always look for a specialist’s reaction. For a support or for a condemnation, whatever one needs more. Anastasia always provided her clients with a feedback. But she gave them something, what they were not ready for. The thing was that at the beginning they just did not know how crazy she was herself...

Anastasia looked at Jean Batist, whose eyes reflected the glow of the fire in the fireplace. Jean Batist watched the burning wood, being somehow faraway, as if he was thinking about something. But, as soon as Anastasia stopped talking, he intertwined his fingers and said:

– Anastasia, as a psychiatrist, I can agree with much of what you said.

But.

The fact is that in my work I pay more attention to the psychotherapy itself. Morality and ethics, which occupy a special place in your skill of a psychologist, are secondary for me. In your case there is, probably, a complex of your individuality, which includes certain features of personality and character, isn't it?

– Of course, Jean Batist, – Anastasia decided to clarify the issue. – One day I was getting hired by an outstanding scientist. He had developed a unique method, which allowed identifying a personality profile. We talked in the office, where I had been invited, and then we stepped out for a smoke. He briefly informed me on the results of my testing.

– It is quite curious. Your level of intelligence and responsibility are diametrically opposite to the level of conformity and anxiety. Plus accentuations. You have extremely high peaks on the schizoid and paranoiac scale. – After that he folded his hands in a pose of a smoking thinker and waited intently. I transformed my answer into a common language form:

– Yes, certainly, intelligent, extremely responsible, absolutely indifferent to a public opinion, atrophied sense of fear. Now about accentuations. Creativity is over-the-top, I can synthesize anything and everything. When I see a goal, I am turning into a self-guided warhead and move towards the goal in the multidimensional space, which excludes any obstacles as a phenomenon.

We simultaneously flipped the ashes off our cigarettes into a freshly washed ashtray. And I got the job. 4 years later I had defended my thesis on accentuants in psychological development of successful people, as well as proved that to be successful, one would need the same qualities that I had got. I had found these qualities in the group of respondents, consisted of more than 3 thousand successful people.

This had become one of my funniest entertainments with the social medium.

The social medium never understood that.

But for me its opinion was deeply indifferent. Having bent the system till the required curvature, I managed to defend my thesis using my intellect. Unlike most of the other candidates for a degree, who did not have enough intellect. But they had a status and financial resources, which provided opportunities for getting a diploma of a scientific degree.

People played a huge role in my life. I was very lucky with my teachers. They managed to stand up for my defence of the thesis. For that I am grateful for life to my thesis advisers as well as to certain scientists of the department, who are of really great spirit, heart and morality.

Coming back to traumas, I would like to say that the highest award to a psychologist for his way of life is a well-being of clients. When I manage to get a day off, there is a habitual joke among my friends: “So what, have you operated everybody again?” It means that somebody has got something cut off, something sewed on, rehabilitation went well. Because the psychologist, who works with traumas, has to be a surgeon. And then a person gets out of trauma-prison to freedom with a clean conscience and untainted mind.

Also important is what the one, who cut off and sew on, has once gone through. It is my profound conviction that working with trauma is similar to diving or mounting climbing. It is difficult to teach how to dive or how to climb a mountain being a theorist. Of course, it is possible to give a lot of statistically average recommendations. But trauma is a specific experience of going through. It is a special type of therapy where theory is not enough. Often it looks as follows:

– What did not kill me, will not kill you as well. You came for this, you wanted to hear this, didn't you? – I usually ask in different forms a person who came to see me on a recommendation. And the person realizes, that if somebody has already gone through this situation, it means that he also has a chance.

Probably a work with a psychological trauma and its consequences can be acknowledged as a surgery in its essence. An existential psychosurgery. When a specialist has his or her own experience of diving and mountain climbing, the therapy process obtains a shade of guidance. The guide's image

participates in the professional dissociation of a psychologist-surgeon as a fragile fabric, woven from a subjective objectivity, embroidered with gold threads of unconditional love.

This I would like to clarify, so that you do not get any illusions.

In their lives psychologists-surgeons are strongly pronounced misanthropes.

And I am no exception.

I sincerely do not like mankind as a species. It is hard to imagine a more stupid, deceitful and unholy expression of life. But the Supreme Being is merciful, and more often I work with the exceptions. And I help them.

Others – I do not help.

Yes, yes, Jean Batist, do not be surprised.

I choose with whom to work and with whom not.

But the main point has to be clarified. I do not blame. But I do not accept.

This is my second principle.

And this, in my opinion, is the basis of success and quality in work.

For example, I refuse to help a person if he is a pedophile. Or a sadist. Or evokes my rejection for any other reason. This is what happens when you walk past an open manhole, and you know for sure that the key word is “past”.

I refuse to help those. Politely but categorically. Because I have my own values, which I collected throughout my whole life. And now I construct any therapy building on this particular foundation.

For the sake of a successful therapy.

For making a person free.

For securing the psychologist.

The deep part of the foundation consists of a sense of respect. It is necessary to respect a patient.

It is more complicated with regards to the surface of the foundation. Psychologists should work on the border of the vectors of moral and ethical perceptions. Of their own, as well as of their clients' perceptions. Figuratively, in the case of a psychologist it is like a huge mirror-like hand fan reflecting a rainbow. Reflected in this mirror-like hand fan are thousands of shades of morality and ethics acceptable for them. And the client has only one perception. Well, sometimes there may be several shades. Because clients do not need more. They have their life, experience, education, conditions that determine their existence. And if the client's view of the world is reflected in the huge mirror-like hand fan of the psychologist, then the therapy will be successful.

In other case – it is just a business.

Or a fraud.

Or a crime.

Or a mental disorder of the specialist.

But not a psychotherapy, which, in my opinion, means a soul's rehabilitation. Do you understand what I am talking about?

Anastasia looked at Jean Batist and once again reflected the inner light coming from the depths of his heart. He smiled back.

– Jean, what do you think of psychotherapy as a psychiatrist?

– Anastasia, I will certainly tell you about it. When talking about my own trauma. But not now. Because you began talking about yourself. And I want you to continue. – Jean talked a little slow, but almost without an accent. After all, his student years spent at the Russian Peoples' Friendship University have left in Jean Batist an imprint of a blade wrapped around by a snake as well as a Cyrillic engraving. He had become an excellent psychotherapist with a good command of Russian language.

– OK, Jean. But being a gentleman, will you give me some preferences? I just have not one, but several traumas, which I could tell you about.

– Of course, – Jean laughed and shook his head. You are a woman. Moreover, you are a Russian woman. A Russian woman who is a psychologist-surgeon! Oh! I want details!

They laughed, and it got lighter near the fireplace.

– Then I will tell you the first story, which happened to me at the time when I was especially happy...

Anastasia looked into the cup with cappuccino. The drink was perfectly ready for use. I wish everybody has a motivation like this, she thought.

The smell of coffee and cinnamon was stopping the time, and Anastasia, warming her hands in the embrace of porcelain, wondered what to begin with...

Chapter 2. Angel's Death

Goldfish Broth

Jean Batist smiled with his cautious smile, poured himself some tea and began to listen to Anastasia carefully.

– What a great meaning has the ritual of sharing food and thirst quenching. As if we not only feed the stomach, but also add some special spice to the soul food. It seems that we not only quench thirst, but also slowly and with pleasure fill with a bracer the vessel of the mind. We can call this a repast, compiled from the temporal and the eternal. This kind of lunch is only possible when the interlocutors are free from the most widespread evil – stupidity. And stupidity is a human evil, eighth sin, I am deeply convinced of that, – Anastasia put her fingers around the porcelain cup and, responding to Jean Batist's expectations, proceeded with her story.

Fateful nuances comprise our reality like the sand makes up the ocean coast. For example, today, when she decided to talk of a trauma in psychotherapy, an interesting awareness had occurred to her. Anastasia recalled the date, which she usually did not recollect. Almost 13 years ago, on November 20, 2003 she lay on a hospital bed, waiting.

She waited, unable to change anything.

She had waited for two days in a row.

Waited for her child to die.

Her little boy. Her Mishenka.

To die inside her.

To die in her.

And this had brought the understanding that she was dying together with him.

And probably no one would believe, but she had died.

This was an absolute, hundred percent death. Her physical body lay somewhere. Somebody took care of it. Her family. Her mother, husband, friends. Thus she was told afterwards. They told her the same way, as usually a person with amnesia is told. But she herself almost did not remember that time. Probably her Guardian Angel practiced in painting and at some point decided to master the technique of pencil drawing. And in graphic arts curved lines should be periodically erased.

Absurdity of the situation had brought such a compilation of emotions and feelings, that to Anastasia, who was a psychologist at the moment, not yet a surgeon, but already a great experimenter, all this seemed to be a bad dream. Viscous, stifling nightmare as it happens sometimes when you cannot wake up.

Because just yesterday she had been brought by the ambulance to the hospital and was told that her waters had started to break. But, despite such period of pregnancy – 6.5 months – nobody would try to change anything.

Thus she was told.

Nobody would.

Because, from their point of view, the term was too small. The chances that a child could be born alive, in their opinion, also were too small. And anyway, why did she bother them with some stupid junk and diverted the whole medical team from celebrating the anniversary of their best gynecologist. They had got a table set there. Vodka was getting warm. And you, girl, has to hang on, it happens like this. You already have a child.

So. It means that you are lucky.

Others have not got even this.

Everything was happening in such an unreal world, that she took a sharp pain when breathing in and lost her mind when breathing out. She kept breathing this way, filling every cell of her body, spirit and mind with a painful insanity.

It all happened too fast. Just last morning she woke up in an excellent mood. Her caring husband had got their daughter to stay for a while with his mother, who lived in the next building, and went to his work. Anastasia went to the kitchen and came close to the window. She always liked to look through the window.

Outside autumn was getting weird.

On the bank of the river, which flowed under the window, reeds competed with fallen poplar leaves. The reeds tried to show up against the background of already dimming water with a row of brown cobs. It provided a contrast to a slate-gray shade of the river water. The river, in gratitude, added some more profound shades of mercury in the slate-gray color. The leaves of the poplars, sparsely growing along the river bank, were carried away by the breath of the autumn wind and tried to get into water. Their pale yellow worthlessness enlivened the landscape in the most paradoxical way.

Looking into this autumn river-filled November, she wanted to wrap herself up in a plaid and to fall asleep. Till spring. To hibernate for the whole winter as a she-bear. To wake up in spring, give birth to her bear cub and begin living. It would be then, when her Mishenka was born, that the happiness would become absolute and obtain some universal scale.

How else could it be? As so much was already in place for that.

She had a beloved husband, the second one, which meant that with him they should definitely live long, happily and the covers of their coffins would be nailed with one and the same nail. Because with so much love people not only live happily ever after, but also die in one day. This was an obligatory condition.

Her beloved daughter, clever, beautiful, her small panther's kitten with the name of a goddess, her Diana. Her first husband's appearance, who looked very much like Steven Seagal, was reflected in Diana by its best features. She was tall, with long, coal-black hair; beautiful, dark hazel, almost black eyes, with ideal face features and a slender figure – Anastasia new that she was growing to be a beauty and a clever girl. With a very kind heart and a delicately organized soul. She was excellent in her studies, was a winner of academic competitions. Kind, sensitive, delicate in her attitude to and her perception of the world, like a crystal bell. What else could a mother dream of?

And her mother dreamed of a brother for her wonderful little daughter. The power of her each previous dreaming was so strong, that all the dreams came true. Every objective had usually been achieved. The desire reigned over the achievement of the goal. So this time also the understanding of her own forcefulness continued to cultivate a selective form of vanity and pride.

She got a great temptation – to feel herself as God...

But Life and Death – are God's Providence. And this had become her first doze of pure medical alcohol, drunk to the bottom from the Holy Grail, at a long rest break on the scenic road of the psychotherapy skills...

...It was a night. The hospital walls had become saturated with sufferings and lost their distinctness. It had been 12 hours already, during which the smell of insanity accrued and became stronger. An animal fear was spreading in her chest and stomach, mixed with the pain of the increasing intensity of the labor. She was in pain.

It was so much pain that she wanted to scream.

The doctor on duty was sitting in the staff room, drinking vodka with other participants and colleagues of the hero of the anniversary. He had waved aside the request for alleviation of pain and with a poorly controlled tongue mumbled something about the damage caused by an anesthetization. And had not even bothered to give just a pill. Just any pill. Even a placebo.

Anastasia went out into the corridor, to the stairs, where it was allowed to smoke, taking out of the pocket of the hospital gown her cigarettes and a memo pad. They did not give painkillers here. But they did not prohibit smoking in a stairwell. Nobody cared about anything here.

Well, at least she got something.

She did not manage to light up a cigarette right away – her hands had already ceased to obey, and they quivered, reflecting the internal tremor of her consciousness. She wanted so much to write something. Her soul demanded a catharsis. Just a small but tangible proof that her mind was still fighting for the adequate perception of reality.

Outside the window the first snow fell. This was early for the end of November in a southern city. If snow ever fell here, it was likely to happen in the middle of winter, or even closer to its end. The snow was scanty, as were the colors of this last autumn month. But it was there.

Anastasia looked at it through her pain and through the dirty glass of the hospital window, thinking that it might be a sign. She tried to reason. This was a specific attempt to obtain hope for a further self-consciousness, which simply might never come. In case her psyche was not be able to go through the trauma.

She opened the memo pad, and holding a pencil in cold trembling fingers, she tried to catch some signs of destiny, poetry and drops of sense.

It was somehow disturbing outside. Using a pool stick, the wind pushed and knocked young snow, rolling it into billiard balls, which fell to pieces like shortbread biscuits. As if nature itself compassionately played up in unison to a strange and frightening tragedy, which was acted out on a green cloth of the billiard table of Her Majesty Destiny.

At some point her consciousness changed the form of perception; the level of control and criticism went down to the water line between the Ego body and the Id bottom. The ship became unstable despite the fact that the Alter-Ego sails had not been lowered yet. Suddenly her fingers became firm, the tremor stopped and the graphite turned into a scribbler. Anastasia new this state. While in this state, she used to write poems in her childhood and youth. And now this would happen again...

Through the darkness of hospital walls, in somebody's clothes,
I am slowly walking to light, to my hopes.
Hope is splashing away in the waves of a sea breeze
As the magic gold fish of my destiny's caprice.
I want so much to make a wish: awaken from your dream!
Just open eyes and, feeling free, get straighten like a beam,
And make a coffee in the kitchen, with foam, in shaky style,
And clamp blue smoke in the lips, and splash a happy smile.
But in a dream the dream creates requirement for humility,
To slow down horrors of decay, just only that ability.
And step away from vanity at slow and steady pace
And find myself against a wall with useless Hell in place.
Devotedly realize that we are all just gnats,
And start to slowly melt away like snowball does in hands.
Offended snow sweeps the woes' pages into dream,
My soul makes me getaway, say farewell, meet the gleam...
The smoke of a cigarette grew in the old blind walls
The fear of loss burnt everything... Though voiceless to the calls,
My genes cried suddenly... Snow melted... Smoke disappeared...
The goldfish broth got cooked, get ready for the weird.
There's still one question, would you please explain:

When with a bouquet of the autumn leaves and pain,
Comes to the table my new friend, the name of which – Insanity.
And we will both enjoy the viand, embracing with urbanity.
Insanity will put my head against its shoulders in a try
To make it easier for me to know, to wait, to die...

Anastasia lit up another cigarette, convulsively filling herself one last time with the memories of the bloodline force. And she remembered herself – as a memory of the past. As if she remembered herself is some parallel reality, as if she had already gone through all that, which she still had to go through.

Dissociation. The psyche's attempt to keep her sanity.

And she turned to the bloodline force.

Elena, Anastasia's mom, always told her:

– Whatever happens, remember that your great grandma Kady had given birth to 13 children, and your grandfather Aslanbek was her thirteenth child. You are a descendant of a great woman.

They lived high in the mountains, where there was nothing but mountains. Kady was a healer, curing diseases with herbs. Reminders of the war had come even to these palaces of ethnic paradise. Four of Kady's children had died because of the severe conditions of the post-war life. Her older children aspired to be like their parents, helping with household and at the farm. And the younger one, Aslanbek, Anastasia's grandfather, had a thirst for knowledge; like the great Lomonosov once had done, he went along his life's road to the light of education. The only difference was that Lomonosov had come from Siberia, and Aslanbek descended from the mountains of the North Caucasus. And later he became a director of a school in Beslan, a suburb of Vladikavkaz.

At that time, when Anastasia's grandfather was still alive, it was beyond belief to imagine that adults could commit a mass murder of children, to show other adults that they were not human beings. It happened during a lineup on September 1, 2004, when terrorists took as hostages the children at the first school in Beslan. 186 children had been killed there. More than 800 people had been wounded.

Afterwards they made the Cemetery of Angels in Beslan. Very beautiful.

Even when approaching it, people used to start feeling chill. Due to a combination of thoughts of inhuman atrocity, numbing human consciousness, near the children's graves, and the perception of beauty of the Angels' sculptures.

Anastasia thought about these killed children as well as about a tragedy which used to come unexpectedly. Terrorism – is an absolute evil. Unfortunately, people do not realize how serious this threat is. Otherwise, politicians would have stopped advocating their own interests and measuring their secondary sexual characters. With regards to this problem, not characters, but factors should be measured and compared. To unite all the countries against terrorism and to weed out this field. To deeply plow the land, root up old, rotten trees, clean soil from weeds and give this land a couple of years to rest. For another couple of years some sporadic weed seeds would come up, but this would be just residual traces. And after the land got some rest, it would be possible to sow wheat. Or to plant a garden. To revive life and cultivate the Joy of Life.

Her grandfather was just an ordinary person, a very kind one. His whole life was an example for his descendants. With his own hands he built a big house. He married a Ukrainian girl Kseniya from a refugee family, whom her father had brought as a little girl from Ukraine, where famine was rampant and cannibalism flourished, right after the Great Patriotic War. Her grandfather had lived with her in love and understanding for his whole life.

She was a Western Ukrainian, a bearer of blood and culture of the Antes, Orthodox, who had grown up in the tranquility of endless plains, where the Danube river was deep and wide, with its full-flowing breath.

He was a North Ossetian, a descendant of the Scythians, an Islamite, who had grown up in the infinity of the North Caucasian mountains, where the river Terek, in a torrent of a mountain river, carried its rapid waters.

They had met and fell in love with each other. They raised their children. And grew an amazing garden. Her grandfather was fond of botany, of plant breeding. Her grandmother worked as a pharmacist. Anastasia, their surviving descendant, always realized this genetically determined life energy, transferred to her by the bloodline force. Thus she was taught by her mother Elena, who buried two of Anastasia's sisters. And Anastasia felt that she was the bearer of this specific Life Force.

She felt that she could survive in any situation. And there had been a lot of situations. And she never had doubts about this truth.

Never.

Even now, slowly sinking into the abyss of horror and autistic animal insanity...

...The morning came. Anastasia realized that she was still able to experience something, slightly resembling emotions. It was like a joy. Because this morning still came.

After the sleepless night, woven of the stuff of suffering labors, which continued beyond time.

But very soon the old cliché came to her mind. Morning could not be good. At that moment this phrase sounded very literal and straight, as a blade of a knife for steak. The steak was Anastasia.

Her labors had continued for almost 23 hours. She had strains. She was put in a regular ward of the hospital's gynecological department. There she had been brought yesterday by an ambulance, first with a threat of a miscarriage, then with the verdict of the supreme penalty for her Mishenka.

The bed, where she had been left to give birth, had some metal rods over the bed-head. When her roommate in the ward, a girl of about 18 years old, who had been placed there for prevention of a miscarriage, saw how Anastasia moved apart the bed's metal rods, she ran up to her and began to cry. Fearfully, bitterly, weeping, stroking with one hand Anastasia's face, wet with sweat and tears, and with the other – her own huge belly.

Anastasia told her something, tried to ask her to go out, so that this little girl, who was going to give birth for the first time, would not have a premature delivery. But the girl would not go away. She continued stroking Anastasia's hand, sometimes trying to loosen the tight grip of her fingers, tightly bent in this mortal combat; the fingers already could not be unclenched, but just continued to bend the metal rods.

Anastasia was so much devastated and exhausted overnight, that when a cry managed to burst out of her, it was like a low hissing whisper. Her throat was completely dry. And she did not know, what she would chose in this state: to get rid of this horrible pain or to get a sip or two of water.

After all, the great creator of a human motivation's pyramid Maslow was absolutely right. Basic needs disable the personality. The only question is the level of expressiveness of a deficit and the duration of its effect.

But it appeared that to completely disable the Anastasia's personality was not that easy. And in the rare moments of her consciousness's clarification she thought about this poor girl, her roommate in the hospital's ward. She realized that the girl would not go away by herself, and then she whispered to her a request to call the doctor once again. And again the doctor did not come. During the past evening and for the whole night they continued their quiet celebration in honor of the hero of the anniversary.

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