

(49)

(50)



“Vodnyi Stadion.”

For me, life in Moscow had gone from being a constant struggle to being simply inconvenient. The danger disappeared and disappointment began to sink in. My life had become a story without a plot, a series of unconnected events without structure, without purpose, and leading to nowhere in particular. *When would I discover something that meant something? What would make this long while worth the while? Or had I been wasting everyone's time?* I was discouraged and disoriented and now, as if to add injury to insult, women with dirty bags in both hands are rubbing their dirty bags against me. My legs are pinned and sullied between the bags. I feel suffocated and frustrated. I can't move and when I try to kick my way out, the women yell at me with all their voice. My job had stagnated. My answers to questions became curt. Nothing was changing. I had stopped moving. And despite all my efforts to the contrary the bags are being piled onto each other once again, reaching up to my thighs, dirty and filthy, muddy and dusty at the same time, until they are up to my waist, then shoulders, pinning my arms to my body. *My God! Could it be that we were going backwards?* The girls that had intrigued me yesterday seemed boring today. It was late autumn. Of course I still drank, but with each passing day it required greater and greater amounts to forget about these bags that are now up to my neck; in greater quantities I drank and drank and still I cannot breathe through the dirty bags, still I could not throw up. And worst of all, there was no one to help me. With one didactic leap, all my friends had suddenly become acquaintances; the latest love of my life was living in Munich; the dollar had dropped; literature no longer instructed me; I had lost my momentum. My Russian deteriorated. And through these damn bags that are almost up to my neck and dirty and pressing me against the wall of the metro car I can't even see the faces of the other passengers. If I could just somehow climb out! If I could just learn a few more words. If only something would happen to pull me away from all of this...

And that's when it occurred to me: *the moment had come.*

At last my time here was up. It was time to leave. There was nothing here for me anymore. *But these bags are so heavy! If I can only throw off the one that has been put on the top of my head, then maybe I can squeeze my way out!*

And so it was at that instant that I decided to leave Russia forever. There was nothing to consider. I was fed up. Irreversibly. I was tired. I was confused. I am covered in muddy, dusty bags. I would leave immediately. And that was that.

That is that.

Period.

End of story.



* * * * *