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Post-apocalyptic dystopia about the future of Russia

CHAPTER 1.

A howl, a vile, monotonous howl, a dull, rusty needle penetrated my sleepy brain. I sat up abruptly, without opening my eyes, and started fumbling with my hand under the bench. The first shoe was found at once, the second, apparently, had flown somewhere in the corner. There was no time to search, and I ran out into the street barefoot.

The icy frozen mud dug into my heels with sharp lumps and finally woke me up. It was dusky outside, though the horizon was already turning orange. "It must be five in the morning. Or nine," I thought. I didn't have a watch-no one in our village had a watch-but we tried to measure time by hours and minutes out of habit. What's the point though - in any case, the air-raid alarm would wake us up in the morning, and in the evening everyone would go to bed when the sun went down and it got dark. The alarm went off, and I groped my way into my halfway house. I would not be able to sleep anyway, I had to find my noodles, eat nettle chowder, and get ready for work.

Yes, yes, that's right, to work! I'm one of the lucky ones who got a job. I mean how to get a job - on the party line. Back in the early twenties, I enlisted in the Young Guard, where I served the great leader and the Motherland faithfully. I fought the fifth resistant column, wrote denunciations on unscrupulous citizens, and so on. And as a result, now, in 2028, the party remembered my former merits and recommended me to the chairman of the village council as a loyal, his man, who should be employed by the party line. Chairman Semenych took me as his assistant and gave me a huge salary - 15 billion rubles per month! This is a lot of money by our standards - just six months is enough time to buy a pair of Chinese sneakers or a new tee shirt. In general, my business has been on the upswing lately. What do I do at work? Nothing - Semenych put me in charge of the diggers. It's a boring job: you follow men and women all day long and watch them digging up soil, carrying it on a wheelbarrow and dumping it into 20-ton containers.

Where does the soil go, you ask? I don't know. Nobody knows. One day, one smart guy asked Semenych, where do these containers go? To which Semenych replied, "What the fuck do you care?" - Then Semenych took out his cudgel and hit the wise guy between the horns. No one asked Semenych what and where, but rumor has it that the land is being exported to China.

Who cares what and where? The main thing is that there is work - thanks to the leader for that. Back in the dashing twenties, he promised to create 20 million jobs, but he failed then - at that time there was a great bloody war for the Russian's peace in Syria and Ukraine. The decaying West in those harsh years tried in every way to destroy Russia, because the Western fags cannot live peacefully while we Russians are free to breathe our Orthodox air.

Ah, the times... And you could once breathe with your chest full, but now you can't. Take a deep breath and you'll cough. The air has become filthy. Sometimes it's all right, but other times the east wind brings the stink - it hurts your eyes. Semenych says it's the goddamn Finches poisoning us, but one crazy oldtimer, who wandered into our village last fall, said that there's a Chinese factory thirty days away to the east, which smelts some heavy metals. But Semenych mocked him and whipped him with a whip. Well, the oldtimer died. But whether he was telling the truth or not, nobody knows. Thirty days on foot is an insanely long time, it's not

one pair of wicker booties you'll wear out before you get there.

I'm distracted by my booze-boosting thoughts... It is probably true what Semenych says - it is time to go to church in the district center, otherwise demons take over my mind, and I begin to question things that initially should not be questioned.

So our great leader in 2025 kept his promise and gave us twenty million jobs so that everyone who was suffering and poor could earn a slice of bread and a nice nutritious shit on a shingle. Some of them, like us, are carting around dirt in containers and others are digging metal where there used to be a dump site in the city. In general, everybody is busy.

While I was indulging in demonic thoughts and questioning the ideals of our perfect world order, the sun peeked out from behind the horizon, and rays of light penetrated through the muddy glass of the window, illuminating the soiled walls of my dwelling and the straw mattress on the bench. A boot was peeking out from under the bench, and I bent sharply and grabbed it, put it on the bench, and began to wrap the damp wrappings around my foot.

Boots... Oh, they're expensive! But without them in this weather you'll wipe your feet with blood on the frozen mud, there's no way out, and you may get two billions, but you'll have to buy sandals. Or go to the woods yourself, cut and weave. Yeah, easy to say, but the license for the collection of balsa cost 40 billion and is valid for only 2 weeks, so it is cheaper to buy balsa booties. There was one clever one here, named Fedka, who decided to just go to the edge of the forest and cut balsa, without a license - for free, so to speak. So he was spotted by Chinese drones in two minutes, and five minutes later a group of Chinese gamekeepers wrapped up the flippers and dragged him into the woods. I don't know what the gamekeepers did to him, but no one ever saw Fedka again. Rumor has it that the Chinese skin poachers alive for their forest, and someone says that they don't skin them at all, but take them to fly larvae farms, where they put them to sleep and process them into nutritious mincemeat that they use to hatch their maggots. The fly larvae farm is not far from us, only three days away, if the boots are comfortable and the shoes are strong, but if you are barefoot, then you can limp for five days... But what am I saying?

Anyway, Fedka went to the forest to steal balsa, and he was caught by the Chinese and punished in his own way, the Chinese way. Maybe we ate Fedka afterwards, because the bread we are given on coupons is made from maggot's flour, and maggots are grown in the fly larvae farm, which is three days away if you walk in comfortable sandals.

Booties buy more profitable, well, at least safer, the more we as patriots simply must support domestic producers. But I dream of Chinese sneakers! I have been dreaming for a long time, but I do not tell anyone so as not to jinx them, because you cannot tell your secret dreams to anyone - demons can hear and jinx them, then go to church, put candles to ward off demons. And one candle costs as much as two hundred million. And you have to put them at least five, if you come to church. Oh, my little Russian Orthodox Church... I have to go to church on Easter and light a candle for our great leader. As soon as I get my paycheck, I'll go and buy the biggest candle I can get, for eight hundred million! If you go out at dawn you'll be in the district center by nightfall, the main thing is to be there before dark, because in the district center when it's dark, there's a curfew - the Cockssux can catch you hanging about and beat you to death with their clogs.

And I also dream about a woolen coat, but all winter I was freezing in a leaky jacket, which I inherited from my great-grandfather - it was my fault, idiot, last year I lost all the coupons

for deadwood in the cards to Semenych. This year, as soon as I get coupons, I will run to the woods to collect deadwood.

While I was thinking and thinking, my feet brought me to the center of the village, where the villagers were already gathering for the morning inspection. It is a tradition in Russia to hold a morning check, where they count those who died during the night or ran away, so as not to cook for them and not to transfer the food. Well, and report to the district center, because if someone escaped from the village, the district center must send a detachment of Cockssux in pursuit, so that they caught a runaway and for the edification of others flogged with rifles on the main square of the settlement.

Today, thank God, nobody died or escaped, so Semenych counted everyone twice and said in a resounding voice:

- Dear, residents of the village of Verkhneye Skolenostanovo (the Uptown of Kneestandinguppers)! Tomorrow we have a great holiday - the Great Victory Day of our ancestors in the Great Patriotic War! Tomorrow you, the glorious descendants of our great grandfathers, will receive your holiday 100 grams of vodka and a holiday food ration of 125 grams of bread from the Leningrad blockade. But we, as true patriots, are obliged to make a present to our great victorious leader and, in accordance with Decree No. 279, raise the norm of production from 10 to 14 containers of rich soil. So now we all work without a lunch break and finish the working day an hour later.

But Semenych was wrong - for an hour, for two, or even for 75 - only Semenych has a watch, so we are going to work until the sun goes down, because you cannot put much with a shovel in a cart in the dark.

- Work, work! What the fuck are you doing catching flies with your fuckin' muzzles? Shovels in your teeth and in the field, or I'll cut your rations! - Yelled Semenych, then turned to me and said: - Hey, you! Stay where you are, there's a market!

Semenych always called me "Hey-you"; in principle, he always called everyone "Hey-you," and you have to figure out where he was looking, if he was looking at you, then you were Hey-you, and if he was looking at a crow, then the crow was Hey-you.

Anyway, I stood up, and Semenych came closer, breathed on me with his delicious, appetizing breath, and continued:

- I'll give you a letter, hide it deep down so that even the Cockssux at the checkpoints won't find it, give you two days leave, and you'll rush on a ferry to the district center to the deputy there. Tell him it's from me, give him the letter, get the box, and come back quickly. You got it?

Of course I got it, but I told Semenych:

- "Semenych, why the fuck are you bullshitting me? What century do you live in? You've got electricity at home, and you've got a scrambler. Your deputy's got all that too, so why the fuck would I do that?

- I can't write on the yokelnet, it's a secret thing, and the yokelnet can be hacked by the feds, and they can listen to the special communications. You're a clever scrapper, you know it all too well. Do you want NATO soldiers to crush you?

- No," I said, "I don't.

- So that's it, pack up and go. I'll give you 500 million roubles for a business trip. You'll have a great meal in the district center - you can buy good sharpshooting without coupons there

in the Russcrapersellieshop.

Of course, I was happy about the money, but my mood was spoiled by the fact that I would miss today's "News with Dmitry Sickelove," which the loudspeaker on the pole in the center of the village broadcasts every day at noon. We, all residents of Verkhnyaya Skolenostanovo, run to the center at lunchtime every day, after a quick balmy drink, not to miss a single word from our loudspeaker pole.

One of the radio programs broadcast over loudspeakers in central squares.

"From the Skrepetzky Informbureau"

Today, tw<radio transmission interrupted by interference> twentieth year near Moscow at the range to destroy uncertified contraband, our Orthodox bulldozers in an unequal battle defeated 7 tons of Nazi cheese, 12 tons of Polish interventionist apples, 4 tons of phallic German kilbasa and 16 GDR geese that threatened our stability, our great power economy and our leader personally."

Once upon a time, when there was electricity in the village, there was a TV set in every house, and we all enjoyed watching it. Oh, what wonderful times those were! And what wasn't on there! Every day we saw how our victorious troops were crushing the terrorists in Syria, how Ukrainian rebels were fighting for Russian's peace in the Donbass, and the missiles, what supersonic super missiles, destroying Washington, we watched on this miracle box! But all good things come to an end...

One day they said on TV that the world energy crisis had started, and now every scrapper resident had to pay 100 million rubles per kilowatt-hour. We had no work by then, so we started saving electricity. We used to take the wonder TV box to the square, put it on a pedestal that had been left over from some Soviet-era monument, and watch our beauty in droves. But even that pleasure did not last long - one fine day, the electricians came from the district center with a group of Cockssux and announced that starting on such and such a date of such and such a year, in accordance with the decree number 426, all the Scrapnuts must pay 500 million rubles a month for the rent of the electric grid, in short - to pay for the wires. The decree is undoubtedly a good one, for the benefit of the Motherland, but no one had any money in the village at that time, so the electricians and the Cockssux cut all the wires, wrapped them up, got into a car, and drove away. No one else in the village had ever seen either electricians or linden electricity. Except Semenychn. Semenychn had solar panels on the roof - real Chinese ones.

Thinking back to the past, I wandered north toward the district center, not even going home. What would I do there? I had some chowder in the morning, but I had nothing to pack for the road, and it was only a 50-odd mile walk. The weather was fine, the sun was shining, the mud had melted and ice worms were seeping into the boots. Oh, it's beautiful! Spring!!! Birds were flying over the fields overgrown with weeds and cawing merrily.

A long time ago, in the unforgotten dashing twenties, we ploughed these fields - back then we still had tractors in our village, and you could buy diesel at any gas station. These lands were still considered ours, I remember, we were sowing rye and oats until the energy crisis hit. That year we could not find money for diesel fuel and did not cultivate the field, and in the fall an official from Roscrapselhozrazor came to us, and fined the village - that they say, that we do not cultivate the land. But so fined that after a month there came bailiffs, took our equipment and shot the chairman of the village council at that time. Since then, the fields were overgrown with weeds, and everything was fine, but after a couple of years, the same official who fined us came and said that the fields are not ours now, as we do not use them, and therefore, in accordance with decree number 379, from that day he, the official, gives these fields to a conscientious user. And since we, the locals, are nominally assigned to these lands, we are also leased to new owners. Then they brought Semenychn to us and declared him the new chairman, ordered us to obey him in everything and to comply. At first we thought that your chairman did not tell us what to do, we would not obey him. And what did Semenychn do? And Semenychn took out a scrapophone and called the district center, and OCON (Special Cockssuxx Unit) rushed there, whipped the whole village with their lashes, and the two scrappers were taken away, and no one ever saw them again.

I climbed the hill, panting, caught my breath, and looked out into the distance. A strip of river gleamed on the horizon. It was a pity that it was out of season; if it were autumn, I could

have had a nice lunch on the river, with such delicious reeds growing there, it would be delicious! Before, when we were still sowing the fields, none of us knew that cane root could be eaten. It tastes like rotten potatoes and onions, but it feeds you better than swanbush and nettles put together. You can eat a lot of bulrush and walk around contentedly, farting and not wanting to eat for about two hours, and you're getting stronger and ready to turn over mountains of black soil. One thing is bad - according to the law you can't eat reeds - if caught, you may be sentenced to hard labor. Of course, Chinese drones are not protecting rivers and marshes - besides forest they are not interested in anything - but if one of them sees it, he can report it to FSB, and they will catch you and beat you up to pieces. That's why you have to eat reeds quietly, so no one will see you.

Previously, I remember fifteen years ago, it was not customary to write denunciations on each other, somehow even considered bad luck, but then the times were different, and there was no benefit. Now the FSB rewards snitches pretty well - for every snitch they give you an extra ration, and if you write a hundred snitches in a year, they might even give you something valuable.

There used to be fish and tasty frogs in this river, but one day they all died out and the water turned sour - you get drunk on it and your stomach hurts for half a day afterwards. I remember that Fedka, the one who was killed by the Chinese, two years ago started a rumor that the Chinese had built a factory in the east and were pouring waste into the river. But when Semenykh heard it, he kicked the gossip columnist in the teeth and said that he was a fake, and if he continued to intrigue, Semenykh would kick him out in front of everybody on the main square. Fedka shut up. Fedya was a mutineer, it's not for nothing that the Chinese killed him. As the saying goes: "God is not a prick, he sees a bit," he punished Fedya for his lack of faith.

One of the radio programs broadcast over loudspeakers in central squares.

"From the Skrepetzky Informbureau".

On February 14, 20<radio transmission interrupted by interference> , the State Duma of the Russian Federation approved in the first reading the bill "On the disposal of potential pensioners. The bill provides for the destruction of the national threat that is individuals who have treacherously reached pre-retirement age. The new pension reform will allow our law enforcement agencies to destroy unauthorized potential pensioners, along with contraband European products. Hundreds of new super-technological landfills will be built in the vast expanses of our immense homeland to dispose of potential pensioners, creating thousands of jobs. Remember, citizens - retirees are a threat to our stability. Millions of hungry, beleaguered retirees are destroying our modern economy, undermining our spiritual staples and rocking the boat. Near-retirees are breeding uncontrollably, spreading pockets of contagion across the country. Only by working together can we deal with the ubiquitous enemy. Your relative, friend or neighbor may be a latent pensioner. Always keep this in mind and report suspicious individuals to the local FSB offices.

Together we will win!
The enemy will be crushed!
Victory will be ours!
Hurray, comrades!"



"Eternal Call"

The sun was at its zenith when I descended into the cursed valley. It's a deadly place, God forbid you should stay here, and if night catches you here, you'll lose your mind, or even your life. Rumor has it that a family of cannibals lives here in the dens of the underground. Cockssux should be sent here to clean up, but they do not do such things, they say they do not have the authority to catch cannibals. The Cockssux are mostly fighting against the fifth resistant column and hunting spies.

In the old days, shortly before the energy crisis, there was a village in this valley, called Flyfuckersovo - it was a prosperous settlement, fifty yards, and all rich, bastards, bourgeois on bourgeois. They had chickens, pigs, even two cows and a horse in the village. Oligarchs...

At that time the reform of education began, the modernization of educational institutions. Everywhere, all over the country, schools were transferred from the Ministry of Education to the patronage of the Russian Orthodox Church. The reform was expensive, but necessary, because the Ministry of Education showed its incompetence in the modern world. The Orthodox Church shouldered the burden of educating the children. And who, if not the ROC, understands best of all in images and education? All over Russia teachers have been chased by foul brooms, books pseudoscientific have been burnt, and on schools have broken roofs and have erected domes.

So, what do you think the Flyfuckerss did? And they rebelled, they recorded a video appeal to the leader, where they kneeled and yelled: "Putin help me! Putin help me!" And they put it on the Net - at that time almost everyone had access to the Net. The crazy fuckers begged the leader not to modernize their school, but to leave it as it was. So they made God angry and he cursed them.

The next day, African swine fever broke out in Flyfuckersovo, instantly spread throughout the village and spread to the Flyfuckersians. Well, at least the Sanskrepedemstantsiya quickly responded - together with the Rosgvardia unit surrounded Flyfuckersovo in a tight ring, imposed quarantine and burned the damn village with flame throwers, along with the pigs and Flyfuckersians

Since then, the cursed ruins have been standing there, overgrown with swan, and rare travelers have been passing through these places. But rumor has it that some fly-flies escaped that time, hiding in the cellars, and they are still catching lonely scrapers and eating them in their burrows underground. I don't know if it's true, nobody has seen underground cannibals, and those who have seen them, won't tell anybody anything.

I have been living in this world for many years, but I still do not understand how it can happen - a man lives next to you, he lives. He looks like a good worker - and goes to church in the district center, and the news from Sickelove listens every day, and works for the good of society, and then one day he becomes a bastard, a traitor, a fifth resistant column. Take Fedka, for example - he was a normal guy, he worked for the good of his motherland, he used a truck to carry the black soil, and then, just like that, he started talking about Chinese factories. He was beaten and dragged to church, the priest twice drove demons out of him with a poker, but he kept talking and could not stop. Semenykh whipped him and was even going to cut off his long tongue, but failed - Fedka ran away into the woods to steal bast for a loaf, where the Chinese huntsmen caught him.

That's how it happens when you can't defeat demons inside yourself, they take hold of your mind and do disgusting things. You are no longer happy with the supernovae hypervelocity rockets that Sickelove talks about, and the hatred for Ukrofascists and Armenobenderovs

disappears somewhere. And if you have hell demons living inside you, you can even start to sympathize with our enemies. God forbid.

The crunching underfoot was the head that was left over from the cursed village. Here, if you look around, you can find a lot of metal - the Flyfuckers residents lived richly, every yard had an axe, as a matter of fact. When metal reclamation took place in Russia, the peasants of Flyfuckers hid their tools and metal utensils. Cockssux and Russian guards dug the whole village, but did not find much metal. They were satisfied with a little - they tore sheets off the roofs, and expropriated motor vehicles. In our village at the time everything was raked out completely, only what the law prescribed - 400 grams of metal per person, the rest was taken.

And it was not a pity as everything was for the good of the Motherland. It takes a lot of metal to make rockets and tanks. Today you hide a nail, but tomorrow it will be not enough for a rocket, and the day after tomorrow the NATO soldiers break your dugout, and you will be chewed up on the square. No, all our villagers gave all metal honestly, nobody hid anything. Although we have suspicions that Fedka hid an axe in the woods. Eh, I wish we could find his treasure...

On the other hand - it's inconvenient to dig black soil with wooden shovels, with iron ones we'd gather more containers, and Semenych would give us more rations. Dreams...

A rapidly increasing roar was heard in the distance, and in a few seconds a Chinese attack helicopter flew out from behind a hill and darted fast to the west. There must be a riot somewhere again. This winter the Chinese brothers helped our homeland a lot. Somewhere in the Urals, a general went mad - or maybe he didn't go mad, but demons got into him - so he started a riot, an armed mutiny. Together with their officers and soldiers, they seized stores of weapons and food, then captured the town of Putinberg (formerly called Chelyaba), occupied it and established their demonic ways there. They shot all the governors and deputies on the main square and began distributing arms to the people. The Cockssux and Rosguardiya could not do anything to them, because they were not trained to fight with armed men. Then our great leader sent there another general and his army, and what happened there is unclear - in general, the second general was possessed by demons too, and he joined the rebellion. And now our homeland would have been trampled by NATO boots, if it were not for the Chinese brothers. They saved our great motherland. I remember several hundred planes and helicopters flying back and forth over us until they wiped the damn city off the face of the soil.

Now only one helicopter flew to the west - it was probably not the city that revolted, but a village. Cockssux and the Russian Guard are not always able to cope with the rebels, especially if the rebels resist.

Last year, two ogres stabbed an entire group of Cockssux with knives - they could not do anything to them with their rifles. It is good to whip a lying man with a lash, yes - it hurts, of course, but not fatally, but against the knife a lash does not work - the knife, it beats to death. In our settlement Semenych took away knives from all of us long ago, so we wouldn't cut each other up. He was right - give us knives, we all kill each other.

So, last year, two ogres came to the district center from the forest, they probably wanted to steal salt, but the Cockssux stopped them because of their stupidity. In general, these Cockssux squealed like pigs. Local people all at once hid in their houses, no one came out to help. The chairman and the deputy there even have guns, but they didn't help the Cockssux -

they were scared. Anybody would hide here. They killed the Cockssux, went to the Roskreprodmag, piled salt and matches, and went back into the woods. No one would even look for them. Cockssux and Rosguardiya have no authority to look for cannibals, and the Chinese do not give a damn about them. The main thing for the Chinese is that ogres don't cut down their forests - and ogres don't. Soon the Chinese will cut down the forest, and there will be nowhere for the undead to hide... although... they will dig holes in them, and try to find them.

Eh, winter-winter! Winter is good - we have to work less, the day is short and there are weekends. The first winter, when we just started to collect soil in containers, it was hard. The ground was frozen, we couldn't reach it with a wooden shovel. Nobody had scrap at us - during the reclamation all scrap metal, axes and shovels were expropriated by Cockssux and melted. Semenyuch beat us with a whip and did not give us rations, but all the same - the soil does not dig with a shovel.

Then Semenyuch went to town and came back with three crowbars. It went well, but it was still hard. The crowbar freezes my fingers, and my palms bleed quickly. Nobody wanted to use a crowbar, everybody wanted a shovel. That is when Semenyuch made the wise decision that crowbars should be used by downcast fags. Cleverest man! There were no fruitcakes in our village before, but Semenyuch quickly found out whom it was time to put down. He chose two of the worst-performing peasants, took them to the village council, and turn them into fruit cakes in a fudge packer manner style as they should be. Roosters - he named them.

Then he put a hole in their spoons and made them live in a separate harem. Now only roosters work at the hardest and dirtiest jobs. He is the wisest man, though sometimes I think he overreaches, but my father in church says that all authority comes from God, and here I agree with him. After all, if the boss is in anger or rage, then it is our merit, so we deserve it. And if the boss is always angry and unjust, it means he is put for our sins, we have to bear it, it is our redemption. It is written in the Holy Bible - the more you bear, the more God is pleased with you. It is our crosses, it is not for nothing that we are called "cross-bearers".

And Semenyuch - he is just, he loves the truth. He did the right thing this winter! Senka made a statue of our leader out of a manure on Christmas weekend, and he looks just like him. And Senka, the sly-ass, makes excuses: I didn't want to, it just happened, like, he says, I wanted to make a rocket, a supernova hyperluminal, but it turned out to be a leader. And he looks at me slyly and smiles smugly. So Semenyuch did not turn him in to the FSB, but he did not even rape him mouth for such blasphemy, he just whipped him with a whip and deprived him of a three-day ration. The kindest of souls!

And that he steals - it is not proved, and the other one will not steal? Put another chairman, he'll steal even more. Anyway, Semenyuch doesn't steal, he takes half of our rations to the common, and the common is a sacred thing.

And if you make a mistake yourself, you're to blame yourself.

Fyedka was always bluffing - he said it was not right to steal, like rations were sacred, there was no community, Semenyuch was lying, he was stealing our rations, so he should be punished for that and raped, and if that didn't help, he should be staked. Is it possible to stake a living person? It is not Christian. And we were given power by God, and it's not for us to grumble against it, it's our business to bear it. That's what the priest says. As it's written in our blood, so be it. Fyedka's a mutineer, a mutineer... He's probably roasting in hell right now. He thought he was the smartest, he kept trying to change things, he wouldn't stand for it. A prideful

asshole, and pride is a mortal sin. Look at you, trying to go against God's will! The Chinese didn't kill him for nothing... Good riddance to him.

There's a rotten tree lying on the road, and it's beckoning: "Come here, come here, crush me..." I couldn't resist - I was too hungry. I chose a sharper boulder on the road, approached the tree and started picking it. Bark beetle larvae - what can be more delicious? Tender, soft, tastes like pine nuts. I wish I could roast them, but I had nothing to burn them on, and I could not make a fire to attract unnecessary attention. I was so carried away with hunting that I did not notice how the sun was leaning to the west and creeping to the horizon. I would not make it to the district center before dark, and you can not go there at night, if the Cockssux catch me, they will catch me dead. At least I've eaten the worm! We'll have to sleep somewhere by the side of the road. It's cold, dark and scary. No wild animals, of course, but some undead or cannibals... That's what really frightens me! In the early XXI century there were a lot of animals in our region, but we poisoned them all ourselves when we cultivated the fields and sowed them - they poured a lot of chemicals into the soil to increase the crop yield and all the animals died. It did not like our chemicals. It was a pity, of course, but what can you do - fuel was expensive, and you had to spend so much money to cultivate the field and sow the seed, that you had to use chemicals to bring about a good harvest and pay for the fuel.

I must build a tent before it gets dark, otherwise I will freeze to death. I picked up dry weeds of the last year and made a house, climbed inside, plugged the exit and fell asleep.

kilbasa... A huge kilbasa, immense in size, growing right out of the ground, and I couldn't see the top of it behind the clouds, and a man was hugging it and eating it up, taking huge bites out of it. I'm walking towards it, and my legs are cotton, and I'm trying to run, but I can't. And the man turns to me and laughs like hell. I looked closely, and it was Fedka! I shouted: "Get lost, you're going to hell, stop eating kilbasas!" - And Fedka is laughing again. He laughed and said:

*- What makes you think I should be in hell?
- Because," I said, "you're a prideful asshole and a mutineer!
- So what? Who says I have to go to hell?
- The priest at church said there's a place in hell for people like you. The priest is a man of God, he don't lie.*

*- Has your priest seen God?
- I don't know, I don't think so," I said.
- But I have," says Fedka, "there he is, God! - and points to the kilbasa and hugs it.*

And I shout:

*- 'That's not true, God can't be a kilbasa, my father would have told me!
- Has your father seen God?
- I don't think he has, but he's read the Bible, and it says what God looks like.*

And Fedka to me:

- That's what the Bible says, that God is a kilbasa. Have you read the Old Testament yourself?

I said:

- No, I haven't.

- That's the thing," says Fedka, "you haven't, but you're bullshitting me. It says in black

and white that God is a kilbasa, and he made man in his own image and likeness. And since man originally as a kilbasa could not walk, he gave him legs and arms, so that man could weave his feet into stilts, and then he made the head, so that man could eat and see where he was going.

- NOOOOOOOOOOOO!!! - I screamed and woke up.

It was daylight. I was dreaming about it...

I got out of the hut and started squatting to warm up. The sun was about to rise, we had to leave - if I hurried up, I would reach the district center quickly.

I couldn't get the dream out of my head, it was a kilbasa God! Tell anyone - they'll laugh. Eh, kilbasa... I can't even remember what it tastes like - I only ate real kilbasa when I was a kid, in the wild nineties. My dad worked at the collective farm, they were paid in groceries. My father was a shit-cleaner on the farm. Of course, they didn't give him wages in shit - only Semenyuch could give such wages - but back then the farm gave milk to the cheese factory, and bulls to the meat factory, so those factories paid the collective farm with their products, and the director, in his turn, gave the workers wages in kilbasa and cheese. It was hard times, those nineties, sometimes there was nothing to eat at home except kilbasa and cheese. Then the leader came to power and stability came - stabilizers came to our village from Moscow and privatized the collective farm, took credits for it, bankrupted and closed it, gave away all the cattle, and let the collective farmers go free... I haven't eaten kilbasa since.

Well, no, there were a couple of times, my mother bought kilbasas from the pension in the store, but those were fake, made of toilet paper and soy. I don't know why the fake soy crap was also called kilbasa...

And suddenly Fedka's voice rang out clearly in my head: "For there will arise false christs and false prophets, and they will give great signs and wonders, to entice, if possible, the chosen ones..."

- I screamed, and, clutching my head, I ran north.

I didn't run far, I ran out of breath. Yes, running is not my thing. You mustn't run from difficulties, you must face any danger, or your ass if you're afraid of pain. That's what hit me so hard, it's not like bark beetle larvae are supposed to be this bad. Of course, I have had glitches in my life, but that was when I was on a binge, after a long binge, and now I don't drink at all - Semenyuch only gives us alcohol on Soviet and Orthodox holidays, and not much of it. By the way, Fedka said that Semenyuch was stealing our liquor, but no way, Fedka. He's dead and gone, the pissed dog deserves it.

And really, what kind of God does he look like? Not a kilbasa, anyway... I wish I could read the Bible, but I can't find it - all libraries and books were burned down during modernization of the educational system, and my father-in-law will certainly not give me his Bible, and in general, priests do not allow anyone to read the Bible. They say that in order to read the Bible, one must be a true sinless believer, but otherwise you won't understand anything. And how can you become sinless, if the priest says that we were born in sin? Maybe they're really hiding something from us. What if the kilbasa is God?

Who read the Bible? And even if someone has read it, and it doesn't describe God, who wrote the Bible? Why should we believe that the author of the Bible saw God in person and then described Him and didn't lie about anything? And if God did appear to the elect, why wouldn't he

appear as a human being, that is, as a kilbasa with legs for walking and hands for weaving, and, accordingly, a head for eating into it and seeing where the legs go? Yeah, questions, questions...

Fedka, for example, died and saw God as he was, so he won't tell anyone anything now. In order to tell, he must first be resurrected. These days, if you resurrect yourself, they'll say you're a zombie, and then they'll kick you back in before you can say anything! Yeah, that's it...

Oh, Fedya Fedya, so many questions...

I'll go to the district center, give a quick note, and go to church. I won't waste money on food, I'd rather buy a candle. And if there's anything left, I'll donate it to the church, because I feel that the demons have completely overpowered me. And I need to ask the priest what God looks like. Maybe he has seen him or read about him in the Bible.

The sun was already high when I climbed the last hill, from which I could see the whole valley with the district center in the middle. Oh, how beautiful this metropolis is! Only Moscow is better than our district center, in which I have never been and will never be. This village is large and wealthy, and lives in it, according to various sources, about a thousand scrappers. The people here live richly, very richly - in fact, everyone has a job. Some collect soil in containers, some collect deadwood for export, and some build new fly larvae farm. The fly larvae farm, of course, is a huge project, city-forming enterprise, hundreds of jobs.

But most of the district center residents, of course, work on a rotational basis, at the Teletsko-Chitayskaya Kanavka. That's where the real earnings are, where China pays for everything - so the workers who dig the ditch from Teletskoye Lake to China have not only an increased ration, but also cosmic salaries. They all have high-tech tools, even iron shovels, not like ours... Yeah, the Chinese need our water, so they shell out the money. What about us? You pay us, we'll dig. Our leader even said that the Teletskoye-Chinese ditch is the future of our great country, it's an investment into our children. What kind of children? Our chicks haven't given birth in five years; that is, they give birth sometimes, but usually to dead kids. Ever since they built bunkers all over Siberia for storing radioactive waste, our chicks have stopped having babies. Why - I don't know, scientists from Skolkovo proved a long time ago that radiation is a myth, and there is no radiation and no one has ever seen it, like it was invented by the yankees to scare us, the crossbreeders. It's true, Sickelove said on the radio that radiation exists, but for us, the Siberians, it's only good - our immunity from it is strengthened, and our life is prolonged. I don't know whose truth is greater. We argued with the men for a long time and came to the conclusion that radiation does not exist, but it is beneficial.

But the women, bitches, did not appreciate the usefulness of the radioactive stuff they brought from all over the world and dumped in the mines - they stopped having babies. It's even easier without kids, as Sickelove said - the scrappes should live for themselves first, and let the Chinese have kids.

In front of the district center there is a checkpoint with Cockssux, it is better not to sit and wait for an individual invitation, you go in, show a document that you have a vacation and a special passport to the district center, take off your clothes and wait while the Cockssux search you. This time, the Cockssux didn't search you too much - they just felt my clothes and shook my boots. I have no pockets, there is no need for them, there is nothing to hide there anyway, and if something important - it can be plugged in the winding, it will not fall out. This time they

didn't check my ass, I guess they weren't in the mood. And the Cockssux love this business, in other people's asses. Well, they're not like that - that's life.

Of course, they didn't find the dough - I had it in my hand, and they didn't think to check it in my hand. If you want to hide something from the Cockssux, clench it in your fist - they don't know that you can hide things in your hands, trying to find forbidden things in your ass. What's there to hide? It's just a stash. I've heard that about ten years ago, when Russia was just starting to fight against Western products, the most shrewd people managed to smuggle expensive cheeses and kilbasas up their asses, and the most sophisticated ones even smuggled Polish geese. But this did not last long, our great leader eventually built a six-meter fence between Russia and Europe, and that was the end of the smugglers' laziness.

The bourgeois in the district center live prosperously, yes. There are practically no dugouts, the houses are made of stone. We had wooden houses in our village, built under the cursed Soviets, but they all rotted away, and the ones that didn't rotted away were burned down when the fire happened. There was no material to build new houses, so we dug the holes for ourselves. And here in the district center, there are scrappers living in houses. Bastards, I wish I could burn them all...

It didn't take me long to find the deputy's house. I knocked on the gate and a dog barked behind the fence. Fucking dog! It's been a long time since I've seen a dog. Long before the energy crisis, we all used to keep dogs and cats: dogs to guard us, cats to catch rats and mice. But then the leader and the party imposed a tax on pets, and since no one had any money, we put all our pets to sleep. For a while it was possible to meet wild dogs behind the settlement, but after the energy crisis, we ate them all. At first, the only pets we had were rats, but rats are very cunning and only live in places where they can steal food - and we, scrappers, had nothing to steal, we ate all our food by ourselves at once. The rats starved, then ate the mice and went somewhere. Into the woods, I guess.

And here's a dog! That's what an MP means, he can afford to pay tax. Bourgeois...

The deputy came out, grunted, I bowed before the gentleman and gave him the letter. The deputy read it for a long time, moving his lips, looking at me from time to time. Then he said: "Wait," and left.

I stood and counted crows that were sitting on the roof of the neighboring house. I counted to twenty, when the deputy came out again and handed me a paper:

- "Here, take the message, you go straight down this street, behind the crossroads you'll see a building with a part of the sign above it - 'Pain...' - that used to be the hospital. Go inside, there's a Coksuck at the entrance, give him the paper and do whatever he says. You got it?

- I got it," I said.

The hospital, the gatehouse... Yeah, here's the Coksuck. I give him the letter. Coksuck reads it for a long time, moves his moustache, looks at me and says: "Follow me". I follow him, we go into a dirty office with peeling walls, Coksuck says: "Look out the window" - I turn around, look out the window, I see a flash and the light goes out...

It is dark, silent, some incoherent conversations through the water - I cannot make out a single word. Suddenly the darkness clears and I see Fedka.

- So, are you convinced that God is a kilbasa?

- No," I say, "I haven't been to church yet, and I haven't talked to the priest.

- You don't have to go there," says Fedka, "No priest will admit that God is a kilbasa, it would destroy the world order, and we'd have to change everything in people's ways. This is a great mystery. Have you ever wondered," says Fedka, "why in church, when you take the sacrament of communion, they say, 'Eat Christ's flesh and drink blood,' what kind of cannibalistic ritual is that? Think about it!

- Well, they give you a piece of bread and a sip of wine, there's no cannibalism there...

- That's just it! - says Fedka, -Do you think Christ was made of bread and wine?

- Well, I don't know.

- So I'm telling you, the priests are hiding from us that God is a kilbasa. They do it on purpose, and they rewrite the true commandments and give us something that benefits them, and they hide the kilbasa from us - they give us bread instead of it. The flesh of Christ is bread! Just think about it - bread, how can bread be flesh? The flesh of God is kilbasa!

- I don't know, I have no reason to believe you, Fedka.

- Do you have any reason to believe the priests? By the way, I don't want anything from you. I don't ask you for money for temples, and I don't make you buy candles. So I have no reason to lie to you.

- I'll talk to the priest anyway. I'm going to church now. By the way, where am I? Where's the Coksuck? How do I get out of here?

- Don't worry, you'll get out. The operation will be over soon.

- What operation?! - I yelled.

- What do you mean what operation? They're cutting out your kidney! What did you think? You came yourself and brought a letter from Semenych, saying that you are a healthy scrapper and that with your kidney Semenych is paying off a card debt to the deputy. Do you remember last year, last fall, Semenych made everyone in the village play cards and left everyone without coupons for deadwood? So then he went to the district center with those coupons and played with the local deputy, and he lost everything and got into debt...

My eyes were blurry. I jerked, the shabby ceiling graying above me. My body was hard to listen to. My lower back ached.

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