

CONFESSION ON THE PALM

To

Tough broads
And clinging vines
Fishwives
And affectionate ones
Realists
And daydreamers
Tender ones
And icebergs
Those who're romantic
Or unromantic
Those who've their stories
Or are inexperienced

To all WOMEN

Chapter 1

If not for my mother, I'd never wake up early in the morning (that sweetest sound of my wake-up call). I opened up my eyes when I heard her calling me for at least the hundredth time.

The first thing I saw was the bluishly scribbled sheet of paper and then looked around the cluttered room. I raised my head from the cushion heavily and read what I'd written at night. It was good.

"Nina! Nina!" I called but my mother didn't answer. "Mum!"

"Are you calling me, Rada?" She hated when I called her by name.

"Will you make some coffee for me?"

"You'd better come down yourself... It's no problem for a young girl to make coffee..."

"That means you won't..."

"Wait! The water hasn't boiled yet..."

Five minutes later Nina was in, with a cup of coffee in her hand. She glanced around the room and resentfully observed:

"Haven't tidied up your room yet..."

"As you can see, dear mum".

"I'm not going to clean it anymore. Do whatever you want..."

"OK", I said and, giving her a kiss on the cheek, took my coffee. "There's some washing under the bed..."

Ninachka began to grumble but I didn't listen to her: With my coffee in one hand and the papers in another, I sat down on a window sill and read what I had written at night.

If you show me a girl at the University who doesn't envy Lola Nizharadze's long and beautiful legs, who's never followed her walking along the corridor with her eyes, I'll tell you who I am (but I know there's no such girl at the University and I feel safe).

When I saw her for the first time, Lola was playing volleyball, her C-cups all coming up and down. Maybe that's why I remembered her and my small-bust complex has nothing in common with it... They say she's butt implants. It's a lie: She takes exercise. We'd be none the worse to take an exercise or two.

I did some investigation and established that she'd no plastic surgery at all. My dear reader, it may surprise you that I had a run to somebody's health history and got around to read it. Well, I hope the Personal Data Protection Revolution may be in the offing in Georgia.

As for the question how I got around to read those data, that's a laugh! Maybe I'm a little wrong in the upper storey but you... Do you really have time to stare at the "yellow" newspaper of mine?!

"Stop poking into where you're not wanted!" my mother used to tell me when I was a little girl and I obviously failed to learn her lessons. Maybe it's better to know how it feels like when "you're not wanted". What are you really like if you learn from the mistakes of others... It's such a joy to pick yourself up...

Tell me true what do you think when you hear the name of Zurab Asatiani or Asata? Do you think of an innocent lamb or a dildo? We have a student candidate to be beatified but we cannot... It's a marvel that the brilliant idea to sanctify him hasn't occurred to our Student Council yet. Even the notorious scandalmonger of the University, regularly provided by me with something to chew, has never chewed him... But things end... and I've prepared a surprise for you.

What made me act so? I'm not going to explain myself with all the journalistic approaches, the necessity to be conductive to the public good... the obligation of a crowd-pleaser to tolerate privacy intrusions and so on...

Did I hate men?

No. Notwithstanding its meanness, willing to see and love each other without any masks, I loved the mankind.

Unfortunately, everything is encased in illusions which we accept and deceive ourselves. I always wanted to live in a different way. What the world would be like if we all tried to be members of the society instead of its prisoners. I wanted my reader to ask himself: Who I really am? Why do my doings differ from my sayings? What makes me laugh when I want to cry and what makes me cry when I want to laugh? It is OK? What makes me judge everyone again and again when I'm so afraid of being judged? Why do I take nihilism for the best way-out? Why do I thumb my nose when I harbor suspicions about my own nonentity? When did I genuinely think for the last time? Where my ability to be compassionate has gone? Who are my true friends? Are my own values really wholesome?

I drank up my coffee, opened the wardrobe and put on what I found first. I was going to be late for my lecture. I rushed out of the apartment and remembered about my camera. Running down the stairs, I looked into the bag to find my inseparable companion there.

Listening to the noise of the city, I could feel its heartbeats. Sitting in the bus, I couldn't force my eyes away from the window: cars of different colors and different people mixed together...

So interesting were their faces... Just flashing here and there, they managed to arouse my curiosity.

Sometimes, caught in the net of lies and truth, I thought I was going to be destroyed by my own temper.

At first sight the building of the University seemed rigorous but if you were in good mood you'd find that the ivory color fined it down. And no one but this building knew that the girl in heels was Rada Modebadze.

The lecture hall filled with garrulous students. We all were so depraved, always eager to dig into someone's soul. Maybe the idea that we waved dirty linen in order to help people was a shield behind which we could hide our mercenariness and the desire to hold the stage.

In between lectures I went out to breathe some more or less fresh air. The campus was jumping: Boys had turned on some songs and were playing handball. The girls were shouting for them.

The chaos and the noise annoyed me but it was a chance to write an interesting article. I sneaked up into the crowd, closer to the playground, and got ready to take pictures.

"Andria, Andria", the excited girls were trying to strike Makharadze's attention. Andria Makharadze was the most popular boy at the University. Scandals about him never subsided: Uncontrolled sex, love affairs, both formal and informal, and squabbles at public places...

Now music played even louder. I could hardly hear myself think. I clicked the button for the last time and looked down at the display.

Suddenly I felt an ache: Something banged into my head. I staggered and fell down. Afraid that my camera was broken, I didn't care of myself. I had aches and pains all over, but I jumped up to my feet to examine my Canon.

"Survived..." I had a sigh of relief and noticed that they all had fixed their eyes on me.

"Throw me the ball". It was Makharadze's voice.

"No!" I called back crossly.

"Why not?"

"Come and take it yourself".

"Leave him alone", said Iakob, a player of the opposing team.

"Stop talking! I asked her and she must bring it".

"Maybe you'd better apologize before?"

"What for?"

I'd never thought of Andria as a man of immaculate civility.

"Paramecium", I muttered and turned around.

"Hey, barnacled, I'm talking to you!" Somebody laughed.

I gave him the finger and went by.

"Where are you going to, foureyes?" Those words set the whole company laughing.

One of the fangirls, I hate such lamebrains, immediately brought him the ball.

"It serves you right!" Andro threw the ball into my back as soon as I turned around. "You upstart!"

I stood there as if rooted to the ground. Everything happened in a twinkling of an eye and I had no time to react. I knew he was standing with that complacent smile, impatiently waiting for me to give him hell.

"You know, Makharadze", I began with a surprisingly calm voice.

"I know what?"

"Just act your age!" I forced a smile as if mocking at him, trying not to let him think that he was the victor and thought: *I'll easily teach you your place.*

I left the playground without looking back. Maybe they thought I was trying to escape.

“How come he knows about it? How come?” bellowed Lola and I, leaning against the locked door of one of the toilet cubicles, listened to her from the inside. Through the gap between the door and the frame I could see her mashed makeup and her eyes, all black then. She didn’t look herself and I couldn’t believe that it was of my own making.

Yes, who would ever think that Lola Nizharadze had been keeping a diary? To tell you the truth I was surprised when I came across her notebook at the computer room.

It’s so strange, isn’t it? I could write in the newspaper that Lola’s grandmother had been sent to the almshouse by her own child, but Lola visited the old woman every single day and stayed there till late. However, I decided to tell the world about Lola’s illegal abortion, how ruthlessly she killed her baby... There’s nothing to do about it: People read such stories with much zeal than stories about one’s noble deeds.

“I’m a fool”, cried Lola and seized her bag like mad. Then she took the diary out of the bag, threw it into the bin and burnt it. She stood there until the notebook turned into ashes.

She wept but tears couldn’t help... She knew that. Finally, she turned on the faucet and washed her face.

Just before she went out of the toilet, Natali opened the door. She’d scraped back her black glossy hair into a ponytail hanging down to her waist. Her eyes were like those of a roe, full of pride... And you’d never forget that thin chin and the tiny nose. Once you saw her, you’d say: That’s an ideal woman!

But why do all beautiful girls choose their friends based on looks? I can’t get my head around it. Does the beauty of their friends redouble their own attractiveness? As always, Nata was wearing high-heels. In that short black skirt she looked elegant; the classy handbag and the golden accessories made her look like a Hollywood star. I often watched her and could never understand how Andria Makharadze had charmed that angel.

“I knew you were here”...

“Nata”.

“Put on some make-up before you go out”.

“Are there many people in the corridor?”

“No, but you must always be your best. What are you waiting for? Take out your cosmetics. Do you want mine?”

Lola opened her bag, averting her gaze from Nata.

“You look like nothing on earth... Look, it’s me, don’t be embarrassed!”

“Have you seen what that bitch has scrawled?”

“Yes”.

“...and I’m the talk of the town...”

“Yes, but it’s nobody’s business. It’s your life and you make decisions. You choose who to lie with... Thousands of women have their pregnancies terminated. You aren’t the only one”

“It’s a blow to Zura’s reputation”.

“Are you friggin’ nuts, Lola? Has sex ever been a blow to a man’s reputation? Don’t worrying about Asata! Tell that coward he can shove it! He made you have that abortion”.

“He didn’t know...”

“...hadn’t told him?”

“No”.

“Why? He had the right to know. Maybe he wanted that baby. Did you tell anyone else? How come that bitch is aware of what happened?”

Well, it doesn't please when someone calls you names, but I got what I had been striving for, I think.

"I didn't tell anyone. I was so scared... puzzled... It was so difficult and the diary was a relief".

"You're such a fool".

"That child was a burden to us... I'm not ready for those responsibilities... and Zura, he has his own life, chasing his own dreams. I believed no one would ever find the diary".

"But they found it and read it".

Natali hugged Lola and they stood there for a while without uttering a single word.

"I'm afraid..." murmured Nizharadze.

"I know but I'm by your side. Remember what I usually say: There are no tight corners".

I last heard something similar in a movie and felt a pleasant tickle... It warmed the cockles of my heart...

"Listen, Lola, don't cry. We'll find that bitch and make her rue the day when she was born. I promise she won't get away with what she's written".

They went out of the toilet hand-in-hand. I didn't know what Lola was thinking about, had Natali's words brought her any relief or not, but if I were her I'd be really happy: A friend in need is a friend indeed.