

LILIYANA GADYKA

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CHAPTER I LOLA

It was on my yet last Saturday night in early March 2014 at the Caribbean club in Kiev. As the Latin music took on an increasingly rousing rhythm and Shakira's song Rabiasso tickled my auditory nerves, I danced off the recently renewed rubber of my short cowboy boots and in a split second my eye fell on a black-haired slender yet voluptuous creature who danced like the devil and obviously seemed to have a special relationship with it.

Slowly and seemingly unobtrusively, I shuffled across the dance floor in her direction, and she kept moving perfectly rhythmically in the same spot as if I did not exist and she seemed visibly taken with herself and the world in her pocket. Although she seemed to be in a trance and completely closed off to the outside world, I ventured in and started some cock-and-bull story about constellations and although she would have loved to wipe her not unattractive buttocks with that, my comments seemed to be visibly difficult for her to suppress any inner fun.

She later explained that at that moment she thought I was from another planet. Be that as it may, she had a trait that was extremely rare for me and that was an irresistible attraction. Although there was no real conversation, it did become clear to me that we both appeared to be Scorpio, born on virtually the same day of the year. She was much younger than me, but almost 2 years later in 2016 in Odessa, she again turned out not to be as young as she had claimed at the time.

She turned out to be 36 at the time. She had only lied for eight years and even then, she was much younger than me, but why she had lied has always remained a mystery to me to some extent. The best I could come up with is that deception was a regular part of her acting repertoire as a con-artist. Although I always remained a bit alert roughly six months later, when we got into a relationship, no bells were ringing in my ears at the time that she might be a Gadyka, Russian for a very wrong woman.

Ok, she was arrogant, domineering, foxy, out-spoken, sometimes impossible and every now and then money would inexplicably disappear from the bundles of grivnas that I nonchalantly promulgated into my trouser and jacket pockets because of that currency's depreciation in value, but that there would be more behind it simply did not occur to me.

In my mind, she was at worst a 1-pitter who occasionally dabbled in it, born of necessity. I neglected to google her, and this was not so much prompted by negligence on my part, but more out of a fervent desire to enjoy my beloved Kiev without too much nagging and without digging too much into potential cesspools, also because I was thoroughly enjoying the vibrant nightlife of this atmospheric and energetic city.

I was a positivo that that mallard Emille Ratelband could have taken a punt on. Dear reader beware of a combination of 2 scorpions. One is already a task not to be underestimated, challenge, but 2 rarely go well together. It is too much of a good thing or too much of a bad thing if you like. Barely fathomable creatures, fickle, occasionally ruthless, extremely passionate and always bent on revenge for perceived injustice.

Since these types are also often equipped with excellent antennae, intuition and good sense, this combination leads to a highly complex cat and mouse game in which a shaky balance of power is manifest. She did not let it walk over her and neither did I. However, we never quarreled and without any hesitation we became, as it is known in the jargon, a power couple that was seriously considered by onlookers. In a strange way, harmony prevailed between us and although mutual jabs were the order of the day, we both experienced them as tantalizing teases.

By the end of this adventure, however, all those teases and misbehavior added up and erupted with me like lava from the built-up magna-chamber. I was then completely done with her within 1 second. But from September 2014, things felt right between us, and masculine and feminine qualities came out to the max. She was and felt like a real woman and I a real guy and though we didn't hurt a fly there was a kind of Bonny & Clyde feeling between us manifest.

Although there seemed to be a strong affection between us, she did her best to hide it and regularly hummed along to Imany's song you will never know. I went to the toilet that last night in Kiev in March 2014 because the few beers I had drunk had descended to my bladder very quickly indeed. When I entered the dance floor again full of expectation afterwards, I noticed that the bird had flown, which only made her even more attractive to me and reminded me of Cinderella, although it turned out later that she had not had any wicked stepsisters, who had taught her to tidy up and keep the house clean because never before had I experienced a woman so adept at not lifting a finger in the house.

I usually did that myself, but she left everything lying around and never cleaned up. When she went to the toilet, she would use one roll of toilet paper per bowel movement and - because I don't have another word for it - would throw the empty roll on the bathroom floor. When she had eaten or drunk, she never cleaned up anything and although I didn't make an issue of it, much later I began to regard that behavior more and more as insulting and contemptuous, albeit with a special kind of humour between us that was much like the film *Pretty Woman* starring Julia Roberts and Richard Gere.

I associated her with an unadopted wild animal and for the most part she resembled a cat in her behaviour and appearance. She approximated the nature of those wonderful creatures to perfection and that was not played because it was just her true nature. In appearance too, she resembled a cat. She had a typical Slavic cat head, very finely built in terms of the bone structure of the head.

She was relatively small and measured 160 cm, was physically iron-fisted and voluptuous. Although she was undoubtedly very attractive, I immediately noticed her relatively thick thighs in September 2014 when she came to my flat for the first time after we had been out all night, lay down almost naked on my sofa and demanded that I massage her.

Although I was untrained in this, I turned out at that time to have hidden gifts that a Thai masseuse might have envied. She was demanding and my massages had to last for hours, during which she regularly let out cries of pleasure, and although they hardly had bicycles in Kiev at that time, I could have, as Van Kooten and de Bie put it plastically, squirted a grown man off his bicycle.

An American acquaintance of mine, one Ricky, a vague figure from California who had apparently had a shadowy supporting role in the 2014 coup d'état, turned out to have her phone number, which was a sign of things to come, but I went back to Holland shortly afterwards and let this serious matter rest for a while.

Ricky was from California, and I wondered afterwards what he had come to do in the bitter cold and turmoil in Kiev during the period February-March 2014. When I had returned home to my hometown of Rotterdam and was once again seriously suffering from an indescribable Fernweh, I decided to send her a text message to which this gypsy lady from a fake painting hanging at our home, resembling the one from my childhood, seemed to bite.

Only much later did I realize that I had unintentionally started confusing her with my love for that mysterious city from September 2014 and when I thought back to that vibrant city or my Lana with melancholy, I automatically and unconsciously associated it with her. That was nonsense because my love for this metropolis was already four years older than the moment, I first met her.

Besides, she was not my great love, that was Ruslana about which more later. I have no idea anymore what exactly I flattered her and said to her, but what I do remember was that I promised that the next time I would be in Kiev we would go out to dinner together in the best restaurant and let me have hit one of her most sensitive strings with that exactly, because she could eat as much as the entire crew of a Ukrainian frigate, but I only found that out 6 months later in September.

Rotterdam, by the way, according to another friend of mine called Tatyana, had a special meaning in their obscene language, but I won't bother the reader with that because there is already enough porn in the world and I would also do myself a favour in this little book to keep an eye out for some sophistication, good taste and class because we live in a flat-out zeitgeist.

At that time, in mid-March 2014, I had no idea if I would ever, and if so when, be able to reside in my beloved Kiev again because my life was hanging by a thread and I was being completely controlled and mentally tortured by an impressive series of (civil) court cases, which, although I had of necessity initiated myself, were completely consuming me and seemed to last much longer than an average human life.

What I could not have imagined back then in March 2014 was that I would already be strolling down Khreshchatyk, say Kiev's Coolsingel, in September of that year. What I also could not have imagined was that in September 2014, due to the political turmoil and the ensuing economic free fall, Kiev's nightlife was completely at a standstill. It looked like I could turn right around right away so quiet was the place.

I am not going to give any (geo)political reflections in this booklet and I have nothing to do with politicians because I have yet to meet the first one who is virtuous, incorruptible and altruistic, but apart from that, politics is little more than a play on words and thus very boring, just like lawyering. For most of my career, I had been surrounded by those dreary untruthful people. I do discuss these geopolitical relations in more detail in my book Gorky in the Netherlands.

In hell, you must be tripping over politicians if you jump aside for lawyers and deliberately lying journalists and accountants who populate the 5^e Gorge of the Maleboge of Dante's Inferno. If I had even a fraction of Dostoyevsky's writing talent in me, I would devote a separate book to those professions as well. Little did I know when I met her those years later she would inspire me to write such a succinct little book called Paarelketting.

Politicians constantly lying and cheating and these days, for lack of substance, constantly hammering at perceived non-integrity opponents, the almost unbearable, no even heaven-sent intrinsically slow-moving pedantic lawyers who look like a fish in a rusty watch when you use the word strategy - except when it comes to sending notes for unproven services -whose only gift seems to be to straighten out what is crooked and vice versa and journalists of the insinuations, imputations, suggestions and pretending to publish hard facts type, puff.

When I had gone to the club Avalon in Kiev on a Friday - usually the most popular and busiest nightlife day - in early September 2014 with high expectations and found no one there, except for a talented singer who had only me in her lap as a listener and a couple of clerks who had oceans of time on their hands, the scare struck me because if this malaise also occurred in the other venues, then I could almost certainly pack up my bags again soon.

So, had Fortuna had that in store for me? That didn't seem to make sense. Since another friend of mine, called Maria-Anastasya - a divine being in every sense of the word, an extremely beautiful and attractive, fun-loving woman - had fallen seriously ill and was unavailable, I decided for opportunistic reasons to send Lola, as she called herself earlier but later turned out to be her "stage name", another text message anyway.

She answered immediately and we agreed to meet at Avalon because the food there was fine, and not too loud music was played so you could still somewhat understand each other. I really wanted to "download" this mysterious creature. However, she did not show up and the next time she did, she flatly denied that we had met before, but I had just finished a mindfulness course and at that time I was all forgiveness and could not get that Buddha out of my head.

Even to irritating humbugs I opened the window to bid them farewell and I had realized the power of forgiveness and that was only temporary because to a scorpion the power of revenge always tastes sweet, and you never change someone's character no matter what social psychologists claim. At most, you can become more aware of your shortcomings and take the sharpest edges off.

So, the 2nd time when she did show up, she still exerted an irresistible attraction on me, just like that first time I met her at the Caribbean club. She was not as beautiful as Maria-Anastasya or Ruslana, but in the Netherlands any guy could have killed for her. She was extroverted, had a certain sense of elegance and sophistication, dressed attractively, did not smoke, was ass smart, a touch arrogant and all in all seemed like a serious prize in the lottery.

She was not the most beautiful woman in Kiev, as it was teeming with miss World candidates on every street corner there, but there was something mysterious about her and, besides that, she was rabid and had something undeniably flawed and Scythian about her. I also certainly do not rule out the possibility that she was a descendant of the so-called Blackjackers hailing from Persia, a folk tribe that made a nice soup of you.

She had big pitch-black eyes. Eyes are the mirror of the soul and when I looked into her eyes later in Egypt, she did not seem to have this soul. In fact, she never revealed much about herself, which made her extra mysterious and attractive in my eyes. She had what they call in English an attitude.

Deep into the night after we had been out for hours - and we did that almost every night because we had unbridled energy together - she watched TV programs that paid a lot of attention to the political situation in her country. She seemed concerned and expressed disgust that some politicians were being thrown into dustbins by the "new heroes".

In doing so, she misled me because I concluded on that basis that she seemed to have morals, but she had no moral compass and imagined herself at the center of the vast universe. Everything revolved around her and although I am not a psychologist, she seemed to possess all the traits of a notorious narcissist. She took so many selfies that even the largest memory card of an iPhone would have been insufficient.

It did not occur to her when she was making coffee with the Krupps machine I bought, which fit Dolce Gusto capsules, to also make a cup of cappuccino for me for once. She was rock hard like a Spartan woman. She never made food for me, not even a fried egg, and she never took anything nice for me on the way to my flat, even though I used to slip her piles of grivnas for taxis and such daily, with which she could have ridden in taxis non-stop because taxi rides cost practically nothing there.

The crazy thing was that it was only later, when I had given her congé, that I was annoyed by her unsympathetic behaviour, but until then I saw it as a kinky game and did take care of my own business and made my own plan. Tatyana, my girlfriend with whom I had hung out for months in 2013 became increasingly jealous of Lola, who months later turned out to be called Liliyana, and when I tried to ditch Tatyana in October 2014 because Liliyana was unexpectedly on her way to me, she did not take kindly to that and would not leave.

When I tried to gently move her to do so and she could not be swayed and I wanted to remove her like a bouncer resolutely but respectfully and gently she clung to me with both arms and legs like an octopus, while her brought Chihuahua looked at us in amazement and likely thought her owner had eaten her last earpiece.

I managed to get Tatyana out cautiously and amicably, but I feared she would be waiting for Lola at one of the three exits and then a real catfight would have been a possibility, but fortunately Tatyana had left in her bolide with her tail between her legs.

Shortly after she left, there was a firm knock on my door by my little devil and although she sometimes drew the blood from under my nails and other body parts, I turned out to have a soft spot for her. The following day I went back to my hometown, which I was beginning to experience more and more as a Gulag. In the morning, I received another WhatsApp from Tatyana with a picture showing a tiny dark dot, which was supposed to represent a bruise she had sustained during the attempted skirmish with me and threatened to go to the police with it if I did not love her.

There is no doubt that Tatyana loved me and later I came to appreciate that more and more. Besides, she was certainly not inferior to Lola in terms of looks, had a perfect body and when she used make-up, which she almost never did, she was just more beautiful. In addition, she was strongly interested in good literature and good films, and she made me familiar with Bulkakov and other great Russian writers.

She was caring though, cooked for me regularly, tidied everything up neatly and possessed other talents that a true gentleman does not list in his book. Still, I chose my Gadyka, suspecting that she was not virtuous. The human psyche is wondrous. With Tatyana, I could have had a carefree life, but I chose the black peril against my interests.

Was that a subconscious choice for unboundedness, grafted onto my fear of comfort, drudgery and routine, afraid of getting a round beer belly the size of that of a 6-month pregnant woman? I really have no idea, but I can't deny that the relative detachment and untethered Ness with Liliyana-and she turned out to have borrowed that name much later from another woman from Kiev-felt comfortable.

Precisely because she was such a dominant brat, I seemed to have a latent awareness that it was easy to get rid of such a nuisance. Her ex-husband must have had opposite feelings for her, because, according to her, he chained her to the radiators of their flat because he was jealous when she strolled with him on the Khreshchatyk in her cleavage, which was cut too far, and her skirt, which was too short.

He allegedly abused and oppressed her and evidently suffered from separation anxiety. I never had that fear in my life. I always left my girlfriends completely free and if they went out with their girlfriends, I was fine with that because I took the position that if they could do better they should do so, but many men are not like that, especially the insecure types.

These can turn out to be real stalkers and often mistreat women and I am disgusted by weak men like that. Women who hang out with those kinds of men and choose those kinds of wrong types again and again, even if they have been abused time and again, I don't think highly of them either. In fact, they seek out men like that and apparently, they get a kick out of it.

Remember that affective relationships between men and women are dominated by a furtive and subtle power struggle and there is often a shaky balance between the sexes. Who is the perpetrator, and the victim is often not always clear. Also, between me and Lola, as I will call her in the remainder of this book, there was a complex power struggle going on under the skin.

As mentioned, we never quarreled, except for the occasional time when she would get down my throat, but generally we had a very pleasant time with her and there was a kind of serene harmony between us as if we were both tigers. It felt very natural, also with her because she said so herself. She was anything but open because when I broke up with her in Odessa after roughly two years, I concluded that I knew virtually nothing but really nothing about her background based on facts.

At that point in July 2016, when I was tipped off by a close friend about her background and participation in various dating sites and then checked her name and address details myself on google, I was flabbergasted and bewildered. Until then, she was as closed as an oyster. In contrast, I said way too much about myself from day 1 of our relationship and apparently that appealed to her because she didn't leave my side for a day or night after that.

I found out very little about her until the last trip to Odessa in July 2016. She had lived in Perm Russia in her youth, had been born before that in a suburb of Kiev and her parents who had to live on a monthly pension of 70 euros a month lived in Lviv in Galicia in the west of that immense country. She had not studied but by her own admission had been the best in school and that kind of impressive information.