Not.A.Simple.Affair

“You can love a person dear to you with human love, but an enemy can only be loved with divine love.” When Leo Tolstoy wrote that he absolutely, without a doubt, was referring to Hank. Or I guess I should call him Mr Davis. He is my boss after all. A company big shot, the kind whose stomach you can see oozing out of his business shirt. I had been on my feet all day thanks to him. Faxing his invoices, collecting thousands of pieces of paper from the printer. Why he can’t print them all at once, I have no idea. And my current occupation, filling his cup with more coffee. He was working late, still rewording his speech on the latest shuttle plans. His eyes darted across the page in a sluggish stupor. The signs of his caffeine withdrawal slowly appearing. Even with the caffeine, he wouldn’t notice that he had spelled their instead of there.

The fragrant brown liquid slowly climbed up his ‘World’s Greatest Dad’ mug. As the liquid approached the chipped rim, my hand shook at this man’s idiocy. They cramped with the urge to pour the whole pot onto his shirt. His skin would burn a highly satisfactory bright beet red. Before the joy of such an idea could appear on my face, the liquid reached the top. Hank hastily grabbed the cup, three fat drops flying from the cup landing on his instructions.

“Christ!”

He crumpled the instructions and threw them across the room. The paper pitifully landed against the office’s plexiglass wall. I went to the corner and picked up his temper tantrum. As I stood up, Hank’s shadow consumed me.

“Thanks sweetheart, you’ve been a real help today.”  
He grabbed me in a hug, his hands cascading until they found their target down the back of my skirt. Once they found it they gripped it tight. Flesh in flesh. His fingers shaked as he let go, craving more.

“Why don’t you come over this weekend? We’re having a barbeque to celebrate the 4th.” Hank breathed into my ear.

I shook my head.

“No…thank you. I was actually going to come in this weekend and catch up on some work. That way I’ll be ready to assist you better next week.”

“Hard working girl, I wish my wife was more like you.”

His fingers gave a final pass through my hair and I left the row of offices. My eyes locked on the cheap, exposed ceiling lights. Neck hairs dancing the longer I spent in the corridor. I felt like a soldier in a gruelling battlefield. Each office was a deep trench, and I was stuck in no-man’s-land. Would I run into someone? What would they say? Would they be able to tell what had just happened?

I stared down at the unending sidewalk, counting each heel click between the bus stop and the deli. The bell rang as I pushed the squeaky shop door open. I squinted at this week’s reuben sandwich pricing, baulking at the cost. The employee shoved the sandwich into a brown paper bag and I was on my way, one step at a time closer to the sanctuary of home. My mouth began to water as the familiar pungent aroma of horseradish stung my nose.

The creaking of hinges signalled that my battles for the day were over. I stumbled to the bathroom, leaned over the sink and began wiping the sticky makeup that had been both my shield and war paint off my face. Black and white streaks running down my cheeks until I became a human zebra. Kicking my heels off, bare feet pressed into the carpet as I sat down to devour my sandwich.

Ring, ring, ring….ring, ring, ring

I sprang at the echo of the telephone. Wrestling with the phone cord, I picked up the receiver.

“Hello?”

“Anastasia, что у тебя есть?”[[1]](#footnote-0)

“Планы”[[2]](#footnote-1) I say, pulling the crinkled coffee-stained document out of my pocket. A smile slowly crept up my face for the first time that day.

1. что у тебя есть? (what do you have?) [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Планы (The plans) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)