TOLSTAIA KAPORTA



by VANECHKA

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Tulubaikaporia

Episode 14: about ways of spending your summer

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> "Once I had begun a chapter with the following (so very original) words: "One fine day" — then struck out "fine" — then struck out "One" — then struck out the whole lot and wrote in block capitals: "FUCKING HELL!" — and left it at that. But I rather doubt the Russian Herald will find this satisfactory." — Ivan Turgenev

I'd like to argue, Tamara Alexeyevna, that summer isn't really summer at all, but "holidays", because that's what I actually spent, whilst summer itself just passed by like autumn will pass, and winter, and spring, and then summer again. Whoosh and it's gone! Here you'd argue that one can't write "whoosh" in an essay, and I'd parry — yes I can, I've just written it, haven't I, and you'd parry back and give me an F or even fail me completely or throw me out of class altogether without finishing reading, missing all the interesting bits, because all the interesting bits are always somewhere in the middle, towards the end. I'd never write so that everyone finds it interesting straight away. It should be the absolute opposite! The beginning should be

uninteresting, off-putting, boring even (in a subtle way), so that one'd want to slap an F on it, just as you taught us, Tamara Alexeyevna. The beginning should make the reader (in this case, you, since nobody reads this — "utter tosh", as you'd put it — except you, unless I throw myself under a train, then social services will come, dig through the notebooks with handwritten texts like "How I Threw Myself Under a Train This Summer (essay)" and find all the answers) get bored, think: "What utter tosh!" But that's how it should be, Tamara Alexeyevna, because everything starts precisely like this — with the feeling that you've come uninvited, unexpected, and don't understand what's happening at all. And it ends, Tamara Alexeyevna, absolutely the same way.

Me and the girls got pissed and went to siphon diesel from the Tulubaikan combine harvester depot together with the boys, and whilst we were siphoning the guard caught us — a drunk without clothes and with a rifle, flaccid, hanging to his knees. What I'm getting at is — after a confusing beginning there should always be something that knocks you off your feet, as if from that room you accidentally entered, they're now forcefully ejecting you, like from a class. But we really did go to siphon diesel, why — I don't know; it's boring in this village, nothing to do, people die from this condition, only children and teenagers somehow cope. The boys asked me not to spread it about; I won't grass the names to you, though you would probably guess straight away who I mean; I sure do have a list — all the F-students. I'll honestly admit, I didn't siphon any diesel, just stood nearby, looking on disapprovingly, for I'm a good girl. If I'm honest, they wouldn't even let us girls sniff it.

I swear, lived to seventeen and don't know the taste or smell of diesel. Alcohol either, by the way, lied about that too, such is my writer's lot — making up all sorts of utter tosh.

I didn't read any books, Tamara Alexeyevna. Well, I did read, of course (what, am I going to lie?), that's all I did in the evenings, but you don't consider them books, you don't like "youth poseurs", anyone whose surname doesn't start with "Tolsto" and end with "evsky". Oh, I'd argue with you about this, Tamara Alexeyevna, I'd explain to you about real contemporary literature at the turn of the century, written, by the way, by your peers, about how one shouldn't consume faeces, triple cologne, brake fluid, get carried away with anti-Christian Buddhism, be inspired by foreign thinkers, about postmodernism, bloody hell! And you wouldn't even argue, Tamara Alexeyevna, you'd give me an F without even listening, without reading, and even if you'd got to the beginning of the second paragraph, at the bit with the dangling todger you'd definitely throw me out — the gun would shoot eventually. But you'd have laughed, I'm sure, when you're at home, reading this, you'd have laughed, and if you'd read this far, you'd have realised the whole "meta" of this situation, and how I, "alas, irreverent, vulgar, but such a clever girl", am leading you round in circles. Let my classmates write about how they went fishing, swimming, travelled to Moscow, flew abroad on holiday, weeded garden beds, ate berries, grilled shashlik, twisted cows' tails and girls' plaits, and the girls kicked them in the nuts in return, I sure would — fits the character, that. Like, your balls have dropped? Congratulations! Here, learn to live with the consequences!

But I won't write tosh like that; apart from indirectly participating as an outside observer in various indecent and illegal activities carried out by uneducated delinquents, sort of wanting to take part myself, but "what will people think" and "you've got to get into university in a year" and "mother would be sad" and other such reasons, I just moped about the area, sat at home, played Warcraft (you don't know about that, Tamara Alexeyevna, and it's better you don't — I'm playing a gnome warlock with pink tails, an unbecomingly evil lil'girl), read sheets of paper with letters about all sorts of antisocial, anarchist, nihilist, counter-cultural stuff, the very stuff your Tolstoevsky didn't like, though the Tolso- part of him quite did.

Here, Tamara Alexeyevna, there should be some sort of ending, which I'd also argue with you about, and you'd give me an A so as not to average out a D for the year, because your heart is kind, and where would I go in this life with a D in literature? I've got to get into university in a year. In a proper essay, Tamara Alexeyevna, the ending only comes at the very end, in the last sentence, often in the last word, because it, like everything in this life — even like summer — comes suddenly, and just as suddenly ends and causes a storm of emotions, and nothing, Tamara Alexeyevna, whatever you might think, however you were brought up under your bright communism, nothing expresses emotion like swearing. Fucking hell! Absolute cuntastrophe, how can this be? I'm in complete fucking shock, Tamara Alexeyevna, honestly, fuck this for a game of twats, bloody Christ on a bloody bike, makes me want to fucking bawl, there are no words, and when there are no words,

that's when it comes to help, swearing; swearing is always with you, always supports you, always fills the gaps in language; it's absolute fucking bollocks, Tamara Alexeyevna, the absolute gigantic bellend of utter tosh! All I can say is — from this cunt of a summer holiday I've gone completely off my fucking head. Here you'd probably finally give me that F and I'd leave, your favourite student, a D-student to spite you, to upset my parents, to my own strange, reckless, self-satisfied joy — the little princess has done something deranged and now sits here pleased, ears burning with shame, head pounding, but apart from that no external signs, outwardly solemn, inwardly a degenerate. That's the kind of cunty bitch I am, Tamara Alexeyevna — rotten to the core, with a spoonful of tar in the barrel of honey, which you'd probably argue with, and I'd argue with you. I'd love to argue with you so much, Tamara Alexeyevna, prove to you what a proper irreverent bitch I really am, not the one you think I am, but it's a shame, Tamara Alexeyevna, a shame that we'll never argue again, a shame that you'll never read this utter tosh, and a shame that for you this summer was the last.

Read next part

Episode 15: about dragonfly's retinal structure

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