



INFLATABLE ANGEL

SETTING: present day Georgia; an apartment in old Tbilisi.

THEMES: history of everything; spiritualism; philosophy; human greed.

GENRE: comedy; fantasy; postmodern novel.

ADAPTATION: feature film.

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

A young married couple, Nino and Niko have a spiritualism seance and call the spirit of George Gurdjieff who eventually appears not only in spirit, but in flesh and blood in their apartment. As he will not go away again, the couple ask their Gurdjieff to help with money. Gurdjieff uses all the means available to a resurrected esoteric: kidnapping, blackmail, hypnosis, metamorphosis and miracle cures. Thanks to their miraculous godsend, the couple move into their newly acquired apartment and open a bakery with a cafe, while all around them fantastic occurrences are taking place.

MOVIE REFERENCES:

The Brand New Testament (2015) a film by Jaco Van Dormael

Arizona Dream (1993) a film by Emir Kusturica



CHARACTERS:

Nino Gorozia – a young Georgian woman, Niko’s wife

Niko Gorozia – a young Georgian man, Nino’s husband

Foucault – Nino’s and Niko’s dog

George Gurdjieff – aka Ray, Gurdjieff’s troublemaker spirit

Manana Kipiani – Nino’s and Niko’s neighbor

Nugzar Chikobava – Manana’s wealthy lover, aka Saint Maurice

Lieutenant Davit Okujava – the district policeman

Gogia – a village drunk



BOOK SAMPLE

SUMMARY:

Nino and Niko Gorozias are a young couple, they have a dog named Foucault and a regular life in a historical district of Tbilisi. Nino has a job in City Hall and Niko is a once-promising, now unfulfilled movie director. One day, bored at work, Nino thinks of a crazy idea and wants to conduct a séance. Niko has nothing against the idea so they decide to give it a go. After contemplating whose spirit to summon, they randomly decide on the philosopher and mystic George Gurdjieff. After a successful seance, Gurdjieff appears in the flesh and starts living in their apartment. He has a beef with Foucault but otherwise seems to be comfortable with the situation. The absurdity of the novel dictates the couple's reaction - they are not as shocked as one would expect. The first night that Gurdjieff spends in their apartment, Niko watches documentaries about the mystic. Most of the videos are filled with conspiracy theories, connecting almost all pivotal events of the XX century to the philosopher.

Even though Gurdjieff is in the flesh, Niko doesn't manage to take his photo. The man's figure always comes out blurry and ghostly. With his presence in the home of Gorozias, everything becomes phantasmagoric. He tells the couple about unbelievable things, such as the story of the foundation of the Georgian metro, connected to the UFO spaceship crash and a cratered landmark in Tbilisi in the 1950s. He becomes obsessed with TV shows, especially the House MD that they currently show on TV.

One day the ghost, who is now called Ray in the text (in the beginning he said he likes the name Raymondo) wants to help out his hosts financially. First, he offers to pawn his golden watch and other belongings, but they come up with a better idea in the end - to extort Nugzar Chikobava, rich lover of their neighbor, Manana. They ambush and capture Nugzar. Ray hypnotizes him. Turned into an obedient dork, Nugzar now does everything he is told. Nino and Niko want to extort as much as possible from him but in the end, they agree on one million and send Nugzar out to get the money. The couple prematurely believes this can be the solution for them, Nino even plans to quit her job. While they are waiting for Nugzar, husband and wife go to the nearest city lake, while Gurdjieff takes Foucault out for a walk and they hit the Mtatsminda (saint mountain) pantheon of writers and public figures. Looking over the city from atop, Gurdjieff starts to ponder the meaning of existence and his place in this world. He thinks about his mother and childhood.

Nino and Niko are looking for apartments and prematurely planning their life with the promised million. Ray is being a naughty guest and after violating their home and personal space, now starts hijacking their dreams and visits them without permission. The next morning, Nugzar appears at their door with a blackeye and a million in the case, which he submissively hands over to the hypnotizers. The couple decides to celebrate getting rich, they book a hotel suite and leave Foucault and

Nugzar with Gurdjieff. Ray starts taking care of his "zombie" and massages him with essential oils every day so that his muscles don't atrophy. Foucault, who has become attached to him, feels jealous.

One day the group is paid a visit by a district policeman, Lieutenant Okudjava, who is in charge of Nugzar's search. Ray takes the situation under his control and tells the policeman that the man who resides with them in an apartment is father Maurice, who proves it by reciting the apocryphes. Just a precaution, Ray hypnotizes Okudjava and makes him forget everything.

It seems that things cannot get messier than that, but the next part of the story is even more phantasmagoric, as it moves to the village called Sabue. When Nino and Niko move to a new apartment, Gurdjieff takes Nugzar to Sabue and trolls everyone by starting a rumor that he (who at this point keeps monotonously mumbling prayers) is a living saint and a prophet. People from all over the country start visiting him. His unearthly healing powers are even in the TV News.

After all these malicious deeds and after trolling the entire country, Gurdjieff starts feeling bored, empty of purpose. One morning, Niko, whose wife is now expecting a baby after a long wait, decides to go to the old apartment and check on Gurdjieff and Foucault. Ray tells him that one day when he was extremely hungry, he ate Foucault. Niko is shocked and asks him to leave, Gurdjieff respectfully obeys and goes back to the land of spirits, leaving Niko behind to find the head of a dead dog in the fridge.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Zaza Burchuladze is a contemporary postmodernist writer and dramatist who graduated from Tbilisi State Academy of Fine Arts. He started writing and publishing his books at the age of 24. Until 2001, he published his works under the pen-name of Gregor Zamza.

Zaza Burchuladze translated numerous contemporary and classical fiction including works of Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Vladimir Sorokin. He also was a columnist in the Georgian Playboy Magazine. Because of the stark and filthy realism of his texts, Burchuladze was physically assaulted by some locals and has lived in exile in Berlin since.

Burchuladze narrates via stream-of-consciousness covering the subject of sex and war as social construction, the limits of nationalistic mentality. One of the most important things in his writing is the language he masters on every page to make even the filthy and rigid texts poetic and musical.