

A Catastrophe Unthinkable

A story by Mari Bekauri

And as strange as it may sound, what follows is not a story merely based upon real events, but is a story that depicts those events directly, exactly as they unfolded, at a certain housing block over on Gagarin Street...

This astonishing catastrophe happened on July 2nd in the year 2022, in broad daylight, as the sun shone down, at a certain housing block, or rather, in the parking garage of a housing block, where the staircase descends from the elevator.

Though the catastrophe occurred on the 2nd of July, the story of the catastrophe was not known until the morning of July 3rd, when the housing block's custodian, upon entering the parking garage, discovered there a pile of excrement and fell into a state of shock...

The custodian immediately called the housing block's property manager to say an enormous pile of excrement was lying in the parking garage, adding that this situation fell fully outside the custodian's responsibilities, and that the residents or staff should somehow take care of it themselves.

Upon receiving this news, the property manager herself fell into a state of shock and rushed without delay down to the parking garage (from the seventh floor, in a bathrobe), for in spite of the shock, she could not quite bring herself to believe it.

No, the custodian was not mistaken. What lay in the parking garage was most certainly a shit, and quite a large one at that...

This property manager, it must be said, was just that kind of woman able to navigate any challenge that might arise, but the problem that lay before her now was so uncommon, so exceptional, that no straightforward solution was forthcoming. For this reason, she took a photo of the excrement, switched on internet data, opened Viber, and with all the feelings of distress and disturbance appropriate to the occasion, announced to the entire housing block group of up to 50 residents, that in the parking garage a catastrophe of such a size had occurred that it was not possible to have been that of a cat or a dog...

No, indeed, this was human excrement...

Not five minutes had passed before 500 messages appeared in the chat, and the residents of the housing block, as had the janitor and property manager before them, fell into a state of shock.

Nino, of the fourth floor, was the first to see the photo and exclaimed:

“What the hell! This is a disaster people!”

Only the number of exclamation points added is too many to properly convey in this story.

Nino’s message was followed by a torrent of messages, inundating Viber and the nerves of all the residents with the shocking news of the strange catastrophe that had fallen on their heads.

The scene unfolded more or less as follows:

Irma: Foo, I’m going to be sick!

Nino: Me too. I’m in shock.

Givi: Where is this exactly? Not by the stairs, is it?

Irma: What does it matter?

Givi: That’s where I park.

Khatuna: Really – which side is this? By the stairs or the electricity?

Zura (who apparently had just seen the photo): Foo! Fuck your mother!

Zura (presently): I beg your pardon, dear neighbors. I meant to say, fuck the mother of whoever did this!

Nino: Well it wouldn't be one of us. Maybe it was a worker?

Givi: Guys, where is the shit? By the stairs?

Irma: It wouldn’t have been a worker. They can’t get in from that side of the yard. Whoever it was must have used the door to the building.

Zura: And how would they know the code?

Irma: A repairman maybe. How should I know?

Givi: Izo, c’mon, tell us on which side it is. I can’t go down to the parking lot right now...

However, at this moment Izo was not able to respond. Within moments of sending the photo, she had set upon a solution and was now in the process of following it to its conclusion.

Elza: I still think it must have been a repairman. Who else could have come in?!

Nino: Right. It didn't fall from the sky. For that size, it was clearly a man.

Zura: Why a man? A woman could not make one that big?

Nino: God, what is wrong with you Zura! I mean not an animal, a human.

Elza: Okay, neighbors, don't fight.

Zura: No, I was confused for a second... Sorry Nino. I'm not in the best frame of mind.

Givi: Izo, c'mon answer us. Which side? By the stairs or the electricity?

At this point Izo managed to say that the excrement was on the side of the electricity (so Givi was safe), and added that regarding the aforementioned issue, she had been in touch with another cleaner who had also refused to pick up the pile of excrement.

A most serious dilemma now stood before the housing block:

Who would pick up the shit....

Again, Nino wrote first: I will not go near it!

The rest followed suit:

Irma: Me neither.

Elza: Oh God, me neither.

Givi: And who would, seriously?

Zura: And so what can we do?

Elene: This must be the wrath of God!

Zura: What's God's wrath to do with it?!

Khatuna: I'm not going anywhere near it either.

Elene: Okay, then what is it?

Zura: Someone barged in and took a shit. What's God's wrath have to do with it?

Givi: Get it with a plastic bag?

Irma: Alright people. What is wrong with you? Why are you fighting?

Izo: Who parks on the electricity side?

Khatuna: Noshrevani and some other women, I don't know her

Elza: If it's Noshrevani's, he'll go mad.

Zura: Izo, is that Noshrevani's parking spot?

But by this time Izo was already back at her place reviewing the camera footage...

The Viber conversation continued among the neighbors. With each second, an additional neighbor learned of the catastrophe and the hysterics started from the

beginning. They were swearing, cursing. Some went down the parking lot and to see it with their own eyes....

About two hours later, Izo appeared again with new information for the residents of the housing block:

She had tracked the culprit through the camera footage...

Izo dropped the photos into Viber.

A person in black could be seen: a frame exiting the elevator, frames descending the stairs and, after ten minutes – frames going up.

Izo: That was him.

As Izo's message appeared beneath, the indignation, the consternation swirled again like a whirlwind onto Viber.

Zura: Does he look familiar to anyone?

Irma: Not to me.

Levan: Me neither.

Nino: Most likely he crept in, took his dump, and ran away.

Khatuna: We must find him and make him clean up the mess he made!

Irma: But how did he enter? How did he know the code?

Givi: Maybe the door was open.

Zura: I'm telling you now, stop leaving the door open!

Izo: No, the camera shows that he came down from the left, did that, and then went out through the stairwell.

Nino: That is to say, he was a guest at someone's place.

Givi: Whose guest was he? Confess!

Elene: If he was a guest, wouldn't he have used the toilet? This doesn't add up...

Irma: He looks like a foreigner.

Natia: This is a violation of public decency. It will be best if we notify the police.... if he gets away with it this time, he'll come back again.

Ruso: Yea, he found himself a cozy spot...

Elza: Is it a man? It might be a large woman.

Nanutsa: To me it also looks like a woman.

Zura: What about when he does it? Does it show that?

Izo: No, that, no.

Khatuna: From the back it looks like a woman. Anyway, I can't really see.

Givi: What woman?! How is that a woman?! It's a chubby man!

Izo: It's a boy actually. An adolescent.

Irma: Yuck.

Nato: Maybe we should call the district inspector's office and show them the photos. They should find him and make him pick it up.

Kakha: There's no point. I called them before about something else and they just hung up. They won't be bothered to find this guy.

Natia: What does that mean, won't be bothered!?! That's not how it works!

Giorgi: My repairman is an elderly guy from Kakheti. As for this fat woman or man, I've never seen them before.

Zura: Greetings, Giorgi.

Giorgi: Hi there.

Khatuna: If anyone recognizes their guest, don't keep it from us.

Irma: And how wasn't he afraid someone would catch him?!

Natia: This is why we should report it!

Nino: Oh no, I would feel bad.

Natia: And don't you feel bad for us, who have to breathe it in and look at it? If we don't put a stop to it now, next time it will be worse. They will think they can get away with it...

Givi: Okay everyone, let's not all lose our heads.

Natia: How have we lost our heads, Mr. Givi?! He is a criminal who must be punished!

Tea: I apologize. I just saw this and haven't read all of it yet. Do we know for sure that this is the person who relieved themselves?

Izo: Yes, we saw it on the camera footage.

Giorgi: A proper investigation has been conducted (here smiley faces).

Irma: It seems nothing saved us. Not locks, not cameras in the entryway. What more can we do?

Giorgi: We can hang up a sign.

Irma: What sign?

And here Giorgi posted a photo – a stick figure doing a poo crossed out in red.

Despite the gravity of the situation, many of them laughed, and as is often customary for Georgians, tragedy turned quickly into comedy, and so the joking began. Before long however, Tea returned to the chat with rage and abuse.

Tea: I have just read everything and have to say, you can't be serious! You are planning on forgiving him?! Forgive him for using the parking lot as a toilet?! No way! I will hang up these photos with my own hands. Who has a printer? Print these photos out for me! Never have I encountered such cowardice! This guy went on our heads, and you are talking about letting it go? Print out these photos for me!

Tea's fervor reignited all the indignation, the aggravation. Natia was the first to respond:

Natia: Exactly! We should force feed it to him by the spoonful!

Irma: Izo, are we sure it's him? We wouldn't want to falsely accuse anyone.

Izo: It was him, for sure, yes.

Tea: So print them out! I will hang them at the entrance and, by God, if he should dare show his face, I will drag him by the nose. Well, I probably wouldn't be able to, but still!

Giorgi: C'mon guys. This is embarrassing!

Tea: Embarrassing is what he did! Why should we be embarrassed?

Giorgi: And what if he couldn't hold it any longer!?

Tea: I will kill myself if I don't figure out who it was!

Giorgi: So go ahead and report it!

Eldari: And what is he wearing? It looks like summer clothes for an engineer...

Elza: Bah, he's wearing all black.

Giorgi: That's it. I'm out of here. Do whatever you want!

And indeed, at this point Giorgi exited Viber, whereas Tea was so angry that she not only left Viber, but stormed out of the flat, out of the building, and out of the yard... from the square nearby, she went straight to the police station in order to report a violation of public order and submit a complaint stating that some rotten degenerate shat in the parking garage of their building and left a huge pile of it for the residents to find who, according to Tea's report, are beside themselves, and having trouble breathing, and also what the hell, how can someone insult people like this by shitting on their heads!

And Tea is truly hysterical as she relays all of this to the policeman, and as the policeman listens, in his heart prays for only one thing: God, please, let me make it to the end of this conversation without laughing, and I'll do anything, I will light candles, sacrifice animals...

And God clearly favors the policeman, for he maintains a serious expression on his face until the end, and with this serious expression he follows Tea to the housing block,

down to the parking garage where, oh miracle, the pile of excrement is nowhere to be found, nor is there any physical evidence, though of course Tea can still show the policeman the photos of the shit, as posted by Izo, as well as the photos of the shitter taken from the footage and about whom an agreement was never reached by the community as to whether it was a woman or a man or even a boy, but Tea finally relents, accepting the situation, and her fire dies down.

The policeman leaves.

Tea logs back onto Viber, certain that one of the residents of the building must have performed this heroic deed and taken it upon themselves to pick up the shit, but don't hold your breath!

As is evident from the conversation, they are not yet aware the shit is gone, and let's face it, for whatever reason, Tea is quite excited by the fact that she is the first to know.

With a note of importance, she informs the neighbors that the shit is now gone, and thus a second investigation is launched regarding to where, and under what circumstances, the shit disappeared.

As the discussion heats up among the community, Izo returns to the cameras, watches the footage with surprise, rewinding, rewatching again at a faster speed. Fact is fact, and Izo enters the Viber chat to notify all the neighbors gathered:

No one has come into the parking lot from the entryway. In all probability, the person who removed the shit came in from the second entrance at the back of the building. Furthermore, this person's identity cannot be established, for no cameras are installed that way, and the neighbors will have to accept that the case of the missing excrement will remain unsolved forever.

This is the strange conclusion to the unthinkable catastrophe, which took place on the second of July, in the year of 2022, in broad daylight, as the sun shone down, at a certain housing block, or rather, in the parking garage of a housing block, where the staircase descends from the elevator.

Translated by Ryan Sherman