

Kanishevsky
a little skype drama

A split window in Skype. In one screen is koshkina778, a woman in a black blouse who sits in the spacious room of the country house, in another is bauntiofmyheart, a young woman with red nails against the backdrop of a modest and unpretentious interior who is holding a strangely cut dress in her hands.

koshkina778 Is it really a Dries van Noten?

bauntiofmyheart Absolutely.

koshkina778 And would you be so kind to show me the label?

bauntiofmyheart Right now. Hmm it's not here, ah, there it is, on the hip. See it?

koshkina778 Silk?

bauntiofmyheart Genuine, not Chinese.

koshkina778 You don't think Chinese is genuine? Hey, in China even over there they've long been cutting Guccis. You're kind of young, you should know this stuff better than me.

bauntiofmyheart Well, some people... are rather suspicious.

They are silent.

bauntiofmyheart So that's it. All there is to it. I wore it at a wedding once.

koshkina778 Your own?

bauntiofmyheart (laughs) Course not.

koshkina778 Why ever not? It's a lovely dress.

bauntiofmyheart I paid eighty-seven for it.

koshkina778 Your own money?

bauntiofmyheart Sure.

koshkina778 Rather expensive. With your own money. You probably earn a lot.

bauntiofmyheart No, well I get by, of course, don't have money to burn though... Will you take it or not?

koshkina778 It's not cheap. I need to think about it. I'm not keen on the zipper, to be honest. I had a Dries van Noten. With a completely different zipper. A different kettle of fruit. You know, that's what some people say: a different kettle of fruit.

bauntiofmyheart Yes, I've heard that expression. I'll sell it for sixty, because, you know, its purchasing power has fallen...

koshkina778 Yes, yes, its purchasing power. But can you try it on for me?

bauntiofmyheart It doesn't run too small, it's precisely the size it says.

koshkina778 I understand, it's just that I'd like to see it on a real person.

bauntiofmyheart I'll find you a picture of it on a model from the internet

koshkina778 No, on a model even something from a rummage sale looks like a Dries van Noten.

bauntiofmyheart I'm not sure, I haven't shaved my legs.

koshkina778 I'm also into feminism, just don't worry about it.

bauntiofmyheart Feminism? What are you on about? Yhey turned off the hot water.

koshkina778 So, will you try it on for me?

bauntiofmyheart And you, hm... are you really going to buy it?

koshkina778 Why do you think I want you to try it on? For some aesthetic thrill?

bauntiofmyheart Well then just wait here, I won't turn the webcam off.

koshkina778 No problem

bauntiofmyheart exits the frame.

koshkina778 'Of course, I bought it myself. On my nurse's wages'.

bauntiofmyheart returns, wearing the dress.

bauntiofmyheart Here it is. Don't look at my hands, I've got fat hands.

koshkina778 Yes true, but your legs are very pretty, even if unshaven.

bauntiofmyheart Thank you.

koshkina778 Please turn around

bauntiofmyheart turns round.

koshkina778 You got a curious birthmark on your shoulder.

bauntiofmyheart Apparently on my mum's side we all have one in the same place. If you look closely, it's like an iron.

koshkina778 An iron, really? Someone's been staring at it rather attentively.

bauntiofmyheart What do you mean by that?

koshkina778 Well, it takes some looking to make out an iron on your shoulder. Someone else must be looking at it, someone with a rich imagination.

bauntiofmyheart (*laughs*) Ah, yes, that's my boyfriend. You know, he sees a face in every post. We can't even walk past a carpet (*laughs*). Recently he photographed the radiators, because they looked like a meerkat.

koshkina778 Like a meerkat? ... the radiators? Like a meerkat?

bauntiofmyheart I didn't believe it at first either. I thought he's gone completely nuts or was just joking around. You know, he just pesters me until I see it his way.

koshkina778 I know the feeling all too well! My husband is just the same.

bauntiofmyheart And it really was like a real live meerkat where the shadow fell. I can show you, ok? Probably the camera won't capture it though.

koshkina778 No thanks. (*pauses*) I don't like meerkats.

bauntiofmyheart What, you saw them in real life?

koshkina778 No, I ...was just speculating.

bauntiofmyheart Ah! I see. Well then? I usually send things by courier; they arrive within three days at the most. Real convenient.

koshkina778 So you often trade your glad rags (*pauses*), right, I see.

They are silent for a short while.

koshkina778 And do you want me to show you my coffeepot.

bauntiofmyheart What for? I'm not buying a coffeepot; I got my own.

koshkina778 No no, not in that sense. It's just that it also...

bauntiofmyheart ... What does it also?

koshkina778 Is similar to a sea horse.

bauntiofmyheart But you refused to look at a meerkat

koshkina778 Meerkat are repulsive, sea horses are kind of prettier

bauntiofmyheart Miss, are you going to buy the dress?

koshkina778 How agreeable that you're calling me miss. I'm nine years older than you.

Silence.

bauntiofmyheart Nine? My ebay account doesn't give out my age.

koshkina778 Well it should do! You show the age of things!

bauntiofmyheart I'm hardly selling myself

koshkina778 well, depends what side you see it from

bauntiofmyheart That's it, goodbye. *(quietly)* What a nutter.

koshkina778 Hold your water! We still haven't discussed Kanishevsky yet!

bauntiofmyheart freezes up in terror. A long silence.

bauntiofmyheart There's some problem with the internet, the audio's gone.

koshkina778 *(laughs)* You're hopeless at lying. Just like Kanishevksy!

bauntiofmyheart What do you want from me... you...I . I don't know what you're talking about.

koshkina778 *(laughs)* About the circus actor of course.

bauntiofmyheart *(as though in slow motion)* What?

koshkina778 Kanishevsky never told you? When you google “Kanishevsky” the first thing that comes up on the screen is award-winning clown. He doesn’t have a typical clowny nose, his is blue. You mean you never googled Kanishevsky? You’ve been dating him for a year and never googled him? Amazing, I’d be rather touchy if I were Kanishevsky.

bauntiofmyheart Who are you?

koshkina778 Hmmmm...you’re worse at figuring this out than you are at selling dresses. I am Maria Stepanova Kanishevskaya, nice to meet you... Liuba.

bauntiofmyheart So why are you Koshkina in Skype?

koshkina778 Maiden name. Maybe you need some water, you gone a bit pale.

bauntiofmyheart I’m fine *(pause)*. What do you want from me? Speak to him, he’s your husband.

koshkina778 Well, I simply thought, well you know, as they say a friend of my friend is my friend. And a girlfriend of my husband...

bauntiofmyheart What a strange logic.

koshkina778 My very own. Listen I got something to ask you.

bauntiofmyheart You sort out your own problems, it’s your marriage.

koshkina778 Good lord, meet with him as much as you want, I’m not talking about that. Of course, it’s difficult for me ... but I already gotten over you existing. Liuba, I have a different request- please, don’t wheedle money out of him.

bauntiofmyheart I never ask him for money, he himself...

koshkina778 Look I'm not accusing you. Material support from a lover is perfectly normal. It's just that we... well, our circumstances, I don't really want to tear my heart out in front of a stranger, but here the situation, he himself will never say it, he'll get into debt, but he'll never tell you. (she is silent). In short, Liuba, I have cervical cancer, I probably don't have to explain what that is...

bauntiofmyheart How horrible... that is... I'm sorry.

koshkina778 It's not your fault at all, but we need money for the treatment. I'd prefer not to humiliate myself like this... I know the score, Dries van Noten, a beautiful life...

bauntiofmyheart It was of his own accord.

koshkina778 As I said, I'm not judging you.

bauntiofmyheart How are you feeling?

koshkina778 *(laughs)* Fine, fine. The Doctor says I'm in a stage of denial. I laugh at my disease. I haven't even cried once. It's called alexithymia, freezing of the emotions. I got my first degree in psychology.

bauntiofmyheart Maybe you need something? I'm a nurse, I can get you on a drip, and...

koshkina778 I know but that would not be very agreeable, as you can imagine, for us all.

bauntiofmyheart Sorry, such a stupid thing to say.

They are silent.

bauntiofmyheart He did not even... give a hint... about this. *(pause)*. How could he behave like that?

koshkina778 Well... probably it's difficult for him too. In a sense.

bauntiofmyheart Yesterday he didn't pick up your call when I was with him and he was so cheerful (*pause*). Sorry, why I am telling you this?

koshkina778 It's not a big deal. Well, we understood each other, didn't we?

bauntiofmyheart Send me your card number. When I sell the dress, I'll transfer the money over to you.

koshkina778 That's unnecessary, Liuba. There's no need.

bauntiofmyheart I'm serious!

koshkina778 I wouldn't take it.

bauntiofmyheart I'm sorry it ended up like this... I never planned to fall in love with him.

koshkina778 One doesn't plan such things, and don't worry yourself! They're optimistic about my case. All right, I'm switching off now. Please just don't tell him about our conversation, he'd never forgive me.

bauntiofmyheart of course not! (*she is silent*). Please get better!

On one screen bauntiofmyheart sits on a stool in a white room as though completely absent. In another koshkina778 moves close to the computer, presses something and retreats backwards but the video still stays on.

koshkina778 Kanishevsky, are you out of your fucking mind? Dries van Noten, seriously?! Pavlik's been asking for a playstation for three months now, what? I can't hear you? Yep, come out from there now, sitting there like a rat.

On the screen by koshkina778 there appears a small, redhaired man. On the second screen an amazed bauntiofmyheart observes them.

koshkina778 Did you hear? She never googled you, did you know about this? Why are you nodding? Don't worry, now she'll definitely give you the slip. She won't even phone, I'm certain, why are you sighing? You need to

learn how break up with girls, Kanishevksy. Why is it always fucking me who does your dirty work? We've been divorced five years now!

The man says something inaudible, he is smoking.

koshkina778 What are you babbling about? Can't you just speak through your mouth normally.

koshkina778 gets up from her armchair, and picks up her bag from the floor

koshkina778 Right, and you promised me a kitchen suite.

The man nods.

koshkina778 Only not from ebay. I want a normal kitchen (*she rifles through her bag and then fishing out lipstick puts on her make up*), all the same Masha was somewhat prettier. This one's so kind of gullible, like a sheep. Where do you find them Kanishevsky? Of course, basically you deserve each other. If the girl sells the dress you gave her, that's it, there's no love between you. I know the score, Kanishevsky, I chucked my whole wardrobe on the rubbish dump when we split up.

bauntiofmyheart It's just... I really needed the money

The man and koshkina778 freeze, they look at the camera.

The man Liuba!

koshkina778 runs towards the screen.

koshkina778 Fuck. I didn't switch off the skype.

bauntiofmyheart switches off the camera and the sound.

The man. Liuba!

koshkina778 Fuck. Sorry Kanishevsky, I didn't do it on purpose. I thought it was switched off.

The man. Liuba!

koshkina778 But why are you bawling! She'll never come near you again, just as you wanted.

The man. Liuba!

koshkina778 You having an attack or something? Right, I'm leaving now, but you still owe me that kitchen, Kanishevsky, I formally kept my promise to you. What a strange turnaround though, strange, wonder what she needed the money for?

koshkina778 leaves the room, from the doorway.

koshkina778 Listen, where's the coffeepot? The one that looks like a sea horse. You haven't thrown it away? I'd like to take it to my place, ok?