

Copyright © 2021 Frank Choco Munday.

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission from the author, except as permitted by Australian and U.S. copyright law. For permissions contact:
choco@hotrodhandbooks.com.au.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, businesses, companies, events, or locations is coincidental.

Kristina's Story

Kristina's Story

Maca Patrola

The Fate of Pavel

O zalzaro khal peski piri
Acid corrodes its own container

The main road through Sector 6 is the Iuliu Maniu Boulevard, or simply '*the Boulevard*.' It is bounded on both sides by car dealerships, auto service centres, trade supply stores, trucking companies, couriers, home improvement centres and fast-food outlets. Further off the Boulevard, the winding back streets were home to junk yards, scrap merchants, warehouses and smaller service centres. It hadn't taken long to locate the place. She had almost memorised her decoded notes that she had documented on her computer at home.

10 May 1996. Popescu spotted outside Roving Mechanics, a mobile auto service centre off the Iuliu Maniu Boulevard. Detained.

*Business is legitimate. Owned by Pavel Contescu (Albanian/Romanian dual citizen by adoption), no connection to Scodra family. Several minor traffic infringements.

She found the *Roving Mechanics* behind a rusted, sagging chain link fence in among the junk yards, set back off an unpaved road. She would have missed it if it weren't for the van with the crude logo painted on the side that she remembered from the online Yellow Pages. She drove past the entrance and stopped where the paved road began, behind a row of cars parked on the side of the street. The Mercedes stuck out conspicuously in among the battered, old cars, but Kristina gave it little thought.

She got out and walked back to where she saw the van through the chain link fence. It was parked facing away

Kristina's Story

from a large, galvanised iron shed. At one end of the shed was a single, open roller door. Next to it, along the outer wall, were a row of barred windows. Cars and motorcycles were parked up against the building under the windows, then there were two more roller doors. The one closest to her was up, and she could see a car up on a hoist inside the shed. A portly, red-headed mechanic was under the car fixing something. She backed up a pace in case he saw her.

A tow truck was parked next to the van. It, too, had the same crude logo painted on it. She walked past the office windows. She could hear voices inside but couldn't see anything through the filthy glass and faded, green curtains. She walked back and looked inside the shed through the open roller door. She smelled oil, sweat and exhaust fumes. To her right was a scarred, wooden door with flaking paint and a crude sign that spelled out 'OFFICE'. The rest of the space was taken up with racks of tyres, toolboxes, trolley jacks and workbenches covered in car parts, empty beer cans and power tools. It stretched all the way to the two hoists at the other end where Red Hair Guy, the mechanic, plied his skills. He was the only one doing any work.

Sounds echoed around the large, steel construction. She could hear the tinkling of spanners, the tinny sound of a radio and Red Hair Guy's off-key attempts at singing a Madonna song in phonetic English.

Kristina looked through the mottled glass in the door. Nothing but shadows and unintelligible voices. She opened the door and stepped inside. A door on the right stood open a crack. A small, tin label, now mostly obscured by rust, tried to spell out 'Toilet.' She stepped forward, cautiously. Pavel, instantly recognisable by a face pitted with ancient acne scars, sat at a kitchen table, his back to her. Opposite him, facing Kristina, were two bikers. They wore dirty, faded jeans and T-Shirts emblazoned with motorcycle logos. Their leather jackets, slung across a rickety couch, bore the insignia of the Night Wolves.

Kristina's Story

The one to Pavel's left was thin and wiry, like a marathon runner, eyes wide and hands open on his knees, as if he was wound up and ready to spring. The other was more muscular, but relaxed, wearing a lopsided grin under a thick, curly black beard. Although they all sported tattoos on their arms, the bigger one had them on his hands and up his neck.

Pavel turned and looked up. "Yes? Can't you see we are in a meeting?"

She looked into Pavel's eyes. He wore greasy coveralls, and he looked tired.

"Hello Pavel," she said, menacingly.

"What...who are you? Do I know you?" he asked, frowning.

"You should," she said. "You drove me around Bucharest often enough."

Pavel's eyes bugged open as recognition struck. "You!" he said, more in wonder than surprise.

The two bikers smiled at her lasciviously. Skinny Guy licked his lips, looking ridiculous, thought Kristina. Tattoo Guy crossed his thick arms across his chest. "Who's this?" he asked Pavel in a thick, Russian accent, still looking at Kristina.

Pavel, recovering from his initial shock, smirked at her and replied, "This, my friends, was Sadiki's favourite whore."

With lightning speed, Kristina was upon him. She ignored his two friends as her rage went from zero to white-hot and gave her wings. She had his head pulled back and her knife was peeling away the first layers of the skin on his throat. She trembled with the effort of holding back the deadly thrust of the sharp stiletto. He couldn't answer her questions if he was bleeding out on the floor.

"Don't you ever call me that again!" she growled.

Kristina's Story

Pavel remained motionless, his hands gripping the edge of the table like small vices, fearful of agitating the blade that had already drawn a trickle of blood. His two friends opposite were stunned by Kristina's speed and ferocity, but she knew instinctively that this situation wouldn't last long. She looked at the bikers, determining which was the biggest threat.

"You two can go," she said, speaking to them all but looking at the bigger one. "This is between me and this piece of shit!"

The big guy grinned. "Girlie," he rumbled, through a throat long tortured by tobacco and vodka, "you do realise that there's four of us and one of you."

She frowned. *Four?*

Suddenly, Kristina's world was nothing but stars and pain as the side of her head met with what felt like a wrecking ball. As everything faded to black, she remembered the rusty tin label she passed on her way in.

'Toilet.'

"*Cacat!*" she swore.

Then everything went black.

The pain in her head was terrible. It throbbed in time with her beating heart, and when she attempted to open her eyes, the intensity doubled. She heard nothing but a ringing in her ears, but behind that she thought she could hear voices. She tried to move her hands, but they were bound together. So were her feet. Then she remembered where she was. Pavel's place. The bikers. Some bastard hit her from behind. He was in the toilet and must have punched her lights out.

Kristina's Story

She wanted to groan, but held back, remembering Pov's advice when it came to pain:

"Pain is in the mind as well as the body. Take deep breaths, relax and think about nothing. Imagine the pain dissipating throughout your body, weakening its focus. Keep still, keep breathing deeply and slowly until you feel the pain receding. Only then start thinking about your situation."

As her head cleared, the voices came into focus. She cracked her eyes open. A dim lightbulb in the ceiling cast shadows around the room, which appeared to be a sort of kitchen. She could hear Pavel and his friends through the open door to the office.

"Go check on her," she heard someone say. She closed her eyes and kept still. The light from the office darkened the room as someone stood in the doorway.

"She's still out," said the biker. She recognised the voice of Skinny Guy. "Fuck, you might have killed her, Max!"

"She's faking. Kick her," came the reply. Same thick, Russian accent, but deep and rumbling.

Skinny Guy came in and gave her a soft kick in the side. "She's out of it," he said.

Kristina heard a chair scrape, then boots stomped into the room. "Kick her hard!" said Max.

Kristina sat up. "OK, OK, I'm awake!" she said, angrily, before Max could sink his boot in. Her head still throbbed, but it was manageable, and getting better. She took in her surroundings in more detail. Small room, couch under the window, twilight, probably around 6PM. She'd been out for a couple of hours.

Kristina's Story

"Get up," commanded Max, hauling her onto the couch in a sitting position, hands behind her back. She saw her ankles were bound with two zip ties. Her wrists felt like they were bound similarly. She looked up and recognised Max immediately. Big, blonde guy, clean shaven, teardrops tattooed under his bright, blue eyes. He was the bouncer at Cundalini's Hand. He smiled humourlessly when he saw recognition in Kristina's eyes.

"You stupid bitch," he growled. "You not only have the Night Wolves after you, but the whole fucking Albanian family! Nero was blood kin to the Scodra. Never thought it was you that knifed him, but here you are."

Kristina said nothing. Her mind was taking everything in. She wasn't afraid, but she knew she was in trouble, so she let her brain and subconscious mind work out a plan.

"Why did you kill him?"

Kristina looked into his eyes. "He killed my father."

Max looked over at the door as Pavel came in from the office sporting a bandage around his neck. "And him? Did he kill your mother?"

The bikers laughed.

"Well? Why are you coming after Pavel?"

"Because he's a part of it."

Max nodded. "Yes, well, that was a long time ago."

"He was a part of the *Maca Patrola*. So I have to kill him!"

Max turned to Pavel, a quizzical look on his face. "*Maca Patrola*?"

Pavel shrugged his shoulders. "Pussy Patrol. That's what Sadiki called the sex trafficking part of the business."

Max raised his brows. "Business?"

Kristina's Story

Pavel sighed. "The Albanians – Sadiki, Nero, Vasile the accountant, Marcu – plus the ones who were already set up here - bought an abandoned shopping precinct in Ferentari as a front for the operation. Drugs, girls, money laundering. All the shops were refurbished, and Ibrahim paid the wages. I don't know how it all worked, but all the money went through the businesses at the shopping centre. The hardware store was converted into a sort of harem. He'd bring girls in from Mangalia, drugs from Albania. A creepy bitch called The Dragon managed the sales of the girls. Ivan handled the drugs."

"Ivan?"

"Ivan Radu. A Romanian local. Pharmacist. He prepped and sold the cocaine and heroin to other dealers but made some brilliant shit that kept the girls docile and happy. Ibrahim called him *Kuzhinierin*."

Max frowned.

"That's Albanian for *Cook*."

"So where did you find her?"

"We were coming back from Scodra. There was civil war further south. Sadiki and Marcu Sadoveanu collected a shipment of guns from an Albanian armoury near Tirana. Just walked in and helped themselves! Glock 31 pistols and Kalashnikov AK-101s. Crates of them. Marcu took them into Kosovo, where the buyer was. The rest of us headed home with a box of unrefined heroin for Ivan to cook. We had to stop at some crappy little town near Timisoara to fix a broken axle. Sadiki met this one's big sister at a bar. He came back a few times, thought he'd convinced her to go with him to Bucharest. She said no."

"So?"

"Well, no woman says 'no' to Ibrahim Sadiki!" he replied, sarcastically. "So we came back with Nero and Ivan, to the farm where she lived. When the old man tried to come at

Kristina's Story

him, Nero clocked him with his own vodka bottle. Went down faster than a buttered bullet. Sadiki thought this little sister was icing on the cake, although she was a bit young. Tatjana sold the older one, but Sadiki told her to keep the younger one all nice and docile under Ivan's drugs. She was strictly for Sadiki's handpicked clients only."

Max stared at Kristina the whole time. He saw the hatred in her eyes that pierced Pavel as he recalled the story.

"So Sadiki was the boss?"

"Well, not at first. Marcu Sadoveanu was. He was part of the Scodra Family, same as Nero and Vasile. Sadiki wasn't. But Marcu was an idiot. He ran the guns from Albania, through Romania to Croatia and Bosnia. Pretty easy, with the embargo going on. But Marcu figured the Glocks would sell at a bigger profit in Romania. So he opened his own gun shop and him and Nero sold them to bikers that came in from everywhere."

"Romania is a shit place to sell guns."

"Like I said, we weren't supposed to sell them here. There are so many easy border crossings, to countries that paid big money. But Marcu got greedy and lazy. He was selling a couple of the Glocks to some rag head who tried to rip him off, so Marcu shot him. He got done for that and sent to jail for years."

"Still," said Max. "A bit of a rag-tag operation?"

"No, really, it was great for a long time until Marcu fucked everything. The drugs and girls made a lot of money. Sadiki made investments, used the shops as a business front. He had an Albanian accountant, Vasile, to handle the accounts. He'd go back to Albania, set up Ponzi schemes that were all the rage at the time. We hardly ever saw him. He left the girls to the Dragon and the drugs to Ivan."

"So what happened?"

Kristina's Story

"When Marcu went down, that was the end. Sadiki came back to close everything down, but then Nero sold two Glocks to an undercover cop and got arrested for trafficking guns."

Max shook his head slowly. "That doesn't surprise me. He was always showing off that gun, telling anyone who listened he could get them one. What else?"

"The Albanians went home, the girls were all sold off, the drugs and guns disappeared and then the shops got raided. A few days later, they arrested Ivan."

"And that was it for your little gang?" sneered Max.

"For me, it was. The Albanians just disappeared."

"Where's Sadiki now?" asked Max.

Pavel shrugged his shoulders. "Don't know. There was a warrant out on him, but that was a while ago."

Max nodded and turned his attention to Kristina. "So she's only coming after your little gang," he said.

Just then, the red-haired mechanic stumbled in. "All finished out here, Pavel," he yelled, on his way in.

"Go home, Dragan," replied Pavel.

The mechanic walked into the kitchen, wiping his greasy hands on a greasy rag. He spotted Max standing over Kristina and his smile instantly disappeared. He froze.

"Go home, Dragan!" yelled Pavel.

Dragan backed out of the kitchen and ran out of the office. A moment later the tow truck fired up and Dragan drove out with a screech of tyres.

"Don't worry about him," said Pavel, tapping a forefinger to his head. "He's a brilliant mechanic, but smart as a box of rocks."

Kristina's Story

Max looked back at Kristina. "I have to think about this," he said. "She killed one of our own, so she must be punished. The Albanian shit does not interest me, and if you want my advice, Pavel, stay away from them. Your Wolf Engineering franchise is at stake here."

"I haven't had anything to do with them since the cops raided Ferentari. Sadiki hired me, not the Family. It was good money, and had some good perks," he added, smiling at Kristina, "but that was years ago."

Max made a decision. "You three, stay here and watch her," he said, pointing to his two fellow bikers and Pavel. "I'm going to the Hand to consult with some of the Patch Members."

Kristina fights back

"I need to go to the toilet!" yelled Kristina. Max had been gone for half an hour, and the bikers were all in the office watching football on TV.

"Fuck off!" answered Skinny Guy.

"I'll shit my pants, you idiot, then what will you do?"

"Fuck!" grumbled Tattoo Guy. "Come on, I don't know how long Max will be, and I'm not going to clean her up."

The three of them stood and came into the kitchen. Skinny guy grabbed her arms, and immediately regretted it as Kristina head butted him and kicked out with her bound legs.

"DO NOT TOUCH ME!" she yelled, with such venom in her voice and fire in her eyes that they both backed off.

"OK, easy, now, calm down," said Tattoo Guy.

Kristina's Story

Skinny Guy rubbed his head. "Fuck, you're gonna pay for that!" he squealed. Kristina just glared at him, daring him to try.

"Are you going to behave?" Tattoo Guy asked.

Kristina breathed deeply, switching her gaze from one to the other. Eventually she nodded and visibly relaxed.

"Just don't...."

"Yeah, we know. Hold still." Tattoo Guy cut the zip ties around her ankles with Kristina's stiletto. In the doorway was Pavel, a Glock pistol aimed at her head.

"You're lucky I didn't put a bullet in your head. Make any more sudden moves, and you're dead," he growled.

"Hey!" said Tattoo Guy. "Watch where you point that thing!"

With Tattoo Guy and Skinny Guy either side of her, they marched her out of the kitchen and through the office, Pavel walking backwards in front of her all the way. He kicked the door open with his foot and cocked his head towards the toilet.

"In."

The bikers let her go as she walked towards the toilet. She turned her head and looked down at her bound hands.

"I can't shit if these are tied!" she said.

"Too fucking bad," said Tattoo Guy.

"Oh, come on! You've got this idiot outside the door with a fucking gun on me! What am I gonna do besides stink the place up?"

With a sigh, Tattoo Guy cut the zip ties around her hands. He turned his head to Pavel. "You hear anything except her shitting and pissing, shoot the whole mag at her! Understood?"

Pavel frowned, then looked at Kristina. "Got it!"

Kristina's Story

Kristina closed the door. It had no lock, but it didn't fit the door frame properly, so it jammed shut. She dropped her jeans and pants and quickly evacuated and peed, all the time listening and thinking. She cleaned herself and heard the bikers go back to watching the TV, while Pavel stayed where he was, finger on the trigger of the Glock. Before she picked up her jeans, she felt around the back of her belt and withdrew the throwing knife. She got another from her boot. Then she pulled up her pants and jeans and did them up. She stood silently for a moment, feeling her rage swell, intensify, enhancing her senses, slowing the world down.

"OK!" she yelled.

Pavel kicked the door open as Kristina threw the first knife that hit him in his left shoulder. As he screamed, he reflexively pulled the trigger, which Kristina knew he would do. By then, she was low to the ground sweeping her feet at his ankles. Another shot rang out and went wild as Pavel went down. Kristina kicked the gun from his hands. It went skittering over to the front door.

Meanwhile, the two bikers were rushing towards her. Tattoo Guy was in front, so Kristina threw her second knife at him, which lodged in his throat. Blood started seeping out, but not gushing, so she had missed the arterial vein. Nevertheless, it slowed him down, and skinny guy was next. She went low and spun on one foot, kicking his ankle out from under him with the other as her momentum took her past him. The moment he fell, she switched her focus back to tattoo guy. She grabbed his forearm with both hands and jumped down on his elbow. With a satisfying crack, it went limp. She pulled the knife out of his throat and shoved it back in. Blood gushed all over her, and Tattoo Guy was finished.

Skinny guy was getting back on his feet and saw the gun. He reached for it, but Pavel was in the way, still screaming as he tried pulling the knife from his shoulder, but it had been thrown with such force that it was stuck in bone. In an

Kristina's Story

instant, Kristina launched herself up and under Skinny Guy. In one fluid movement, she shoved the palm of her left hand under the point of his chin, exposing his throat. The elbow of her right arm came around in the same split second.

Pov had once told her that her hands weren't big enough to choke a strong man to death, but her small fists made deadly projectiles if wielded with speed and accuracy.

But for pure blunt force, yer elbow packs the mightiest punch. Get in close and put yer whole body behind it and follow through with your head and eyes.

Her elbow struck his throat, and Skinny Guy staggered backwards, gagging, then he turned around, putting his back to Kristina. She jumped on his back, wrapped her legs around his waist and rose with him. She cursed at herself for not recovering the knife from Tattoo Guy's neck, but she grabbed Skinny Guy's eyes from behind and bent his head back. His throat again exposed, she put all her strength into two more quick punches, which finally collapsed his windpipe. He dropped to his knees gagging and trying in vain to suck air through his damaged throat. She let him go, pushed herself off his back and landed lightly on her feet. Pavel had managed to get to his knees, but as he brought one foot under him, Kristina spun and kicked him in the head, knocking him senseless.

The whole fight had lasted only seconds. Kristina's speed and power was no match for brute strength.

She did a quick recce – Skinny Guy squirmed and make horrible choking noises that she ignored. Tattoo Guy lay on the floor holding firmly on to the hilt of the knife, which was stemming the flow of arterial blood. Pavel was regaining consciousness as she dragged him to the middle of the room away from the two bikers. She walked calmly over them and retrieved the gun. She could hear sirens in the distance. The police had been called because of the

Kristina's Story

gunshots, so she didn't have much time. She recovered her throwing knife from Pavel's shoulder, which elicited a blood curdling scream. She sheathed her stiletto and checked the gun. It was loaded, ready to fire.

"I want my knife back," she said to Tattoo Guy.

He just stared at her with hate and fury, unable to do anything but hold the knife in place.

She grabbed an old tee shirt from a pile of rags and wiped the gun of any fingerprints. Then she wrapped the gun in the tee shirt and aimed it at Pavel.

"Pavel!" she called. He raised his head groggily. When he grasped the fact that he was staring down the barrel of the gun, he trembled in fear.

"No! Please!"

"Those 'perks' you had with the *Maca Patrola*. Were they worth it?"

She raised the gun and shot Pavel between the eyes.

As he flopped down to the floor, Kristina dropped the gun into Tattoo Guy's lap and ripped the knife from his neck. Blood gushed, and she jumped away. Tattoo Guy grabbed the gun, twisted around, and fired at Kristina's rapidly retreating form, but he was weak from blood loss and the shot went wild. Desperately, he wrapped the tee shirt around his neck to stop losing any more blood.

The sirens were coming closer.

Kristina sprinted from the building and out through the gate.

Kristina stopped once to refuel on her way back to Ciacova. Still covered in blood, it was too early in the morning at the service centre for anyone to notice. She made the trip in

Kristina's Story

under six hours. The effortless power and smooth ride of the Mercedes was calming. When she arrived home, she threw all her clothes into a bin and had a hot shower in her newly renovated bathroom. Slipping on an oversized T Shirt, she was asleep before her head hit the pillow.

It was mid-morning on a Friday when she finally woke up. She had a black eye where Max had hit her, and that side of her face was swollen, but otherwise she was fine, if a little sore. She got dressed and drove to Ciacova for breakfast at Guda's café. She fussed and fretted at Kristina's injury despite reassurances that it was fine, *an accident from working too hard on the house*, but Guda clucked and mothered her anyway. Kristina let her.

The roof was all finished; the local farm hands had done an excellent job. She would pay them a bonus.

Over the next couple of days, Kristina went over her evidence, switching between the diary and Dvorsky's notebook, adding bits of information to her own transcripts. Some of the things that Pavel mentioned were interesting and filled a few gaps in her knowledge. She theorised that someone was double crossing the Albanians, and she didn't think it was Vasile. She also didn't think the Albanians knew anything about Garage 12, including Ibrahim.

She went back over the diary that she now suspected was Vasile's, but Ivan had somehow got a hold of it. According to her research, Ivan's drug network was higher up the chain of distributorship than the Romanian police suspected. He sold to dealers, not users, and the Dragon had access to the pharmaceuticals he needed for his experimental concoctions.

Tatjana Grigorcea, according to the drug disposal documents, signed for the disposal of the drugs. A few

Kristina's Story

phone calls later, she knew she once worked at the Emergency Clinical Hospital as a Ward Sister, then at the private Ursu Family Clinic. Her current whereabouts were unknown but searches for Ursu Family Clinic produced some interesting data.

Doctor Pitar Ursu was a well-respected Gynaecologist. He was once the head of the Romanian Society of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and had his own private clinic (Ursu Family Clinic) in Sector One (now called the Romanian Integrated Family Planning Service). According to numerous newspaper sites, his diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis forced his retirement, but there was some reporting of a scandal involving illegal terminations. He now lives in his mansion on Brodina Street, overlooking Lake Baneasa. He'd also written several books to great acclaim from the medical industry. One of the latest featured a picture of his head and shoulders on the front cover.

It sent a shiver up and down Kristina's spine.

"Get up!" came a voice from a long way away. Hands grappled her, picking her up. She couldn't open her eyes.

"She's out of it," said another voice.

"Get her into the van."

She opened her eyes. Pain. Someone pulling her out of the seat, hurting her arms. She banged her head on the door frame. It was night-time. She closed her eyes again.

"Can you walk?"

Kristina's Story

She opened her mouth to answer, but her throat was dry, and she was tired.

So tired.

Someone held her arms. She put one foot in front of the other. Just as well because she couldn't keep this up. She closed her eyes again.

Was she back in bed?

No.

Sounds. Like cutlery in a kitchen.

Where am I?

Kristina's eyes opened to tiny slits, and she immediately closed them. The light was too bright. She lay on a narrow bed, on her back with her legs in the air. A shadow passed over her, and she opened her eyes again. She stared up into the grinning face of an elderly man. A stethoscope hung around his neck, and she could feel something tightening on her arm as the man squeezed a rubber ball. He placed the stethoscope on her inner arm, and as he did so, he moved out of the shadow and the bright light shone on her again. She snapped her eyes shut, and the tight band around her arm loosened as the doctor finished reading her blood pressure. She felt someone massaging her lower abdomen and tried again to open her eyes. The world swam, and she drifted off again. In her slumber, she felt someone's hands on her thighs, on her stomach and now they were inside her. She felt a pin prick of pain, then oblivion overcame her once again.

Kristina's Story

When she awoke, she was back in the dark room, on the futon, her wrist cuffed to the ring bolt again. She felt tired but...happy? No, impossible. She had no reason to be happy, but.... She concluded that she wasn't 'happy to be alive' happy, she was just... just... happy. She pondered this strange feeling and decided that it was the drugs these creeps had given her. What's more, her vagina was sore, and she wondered who had violated her. She ran her free hand over her skin and felt the two tiny stitches in her lower abdomen, and the bristly rash.

What the...?

She screamed! Without knowing exactly what they had done to her, she suspected that she had been 'neutered' in the same way they neutered pigs on the farm.

"WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME!" she bellowed at no-one in particular.
