

Pulling Off the Impossible

One summer day, while Osysa was working near his garage, he was busy re-welding the underside of a car. Suddenly, he noticed Valentina standing next to him. She wasn't alone — beside her stood a classic Georgian type: a mustachioed, strapping man in a flat cap of the type humorously called 'the airfield,' as if big enough to land a plane.

"Valya, what happened? How did you even find me here?" Osysa asked, surprised less by her visit than by her companion.

"You know, Osysa, you can find anyone anywhere if you know how to use your tongue," she replied with a smile.

"Oh, sure — never be afraid to ask," Osysa added.

He was still standing by the car, holding a welding torch.

"I'd like a word with you in private, Osysa," Valentina said softly, leaning toward him.

Osysa set the torch down on the car's underside and led her into the garage, where they sat on a pair of detached car seats he had set up at a comfortable height. The next moment Valentina began her unusual story.

"The guy with me is Misha, the boyfriend of a friend of mine. Her husband went away on a business trip, she told Misha about it, and Misha flew in right away. She couldn't bring him home — the neighbors would notice — so they drove her car out to their dacha in Ust-Narva. Everything was fine until the drive back, when they got into a fender-bender with an oncoming car. Misha was driving, and now he's willing to pay whatever it takes, as long as the car is fixed before her husband gets home."

"Valya, if I restore it, it'll be obvious it was just repainted," Osysa said, shrugging in confusion.

"That's not a problem — the car isn't new, but it was repainted recently," Valentina reassured him.

“When’s the husband coming back?” Osysa asked, already weighing his options.

“In six days,” Valentina said quietly, hoping Osysa would help.

“When and where can I see the car?”

“It’s here now,” Valentina said, her voice brightening.

“Have him drive it in,” Osysa said cheerfully.

“Osysa, it can’t be driven. It was brought here on a truck — it’s parked right outside the entrance to your garage complex.”

They left Osysa’s garage, collected Misha, and walked over to the car. When Osysa saw it, he was taken aback. The entire left side was caved in, and there was a crease at the edge of the roof, right in the middle. The driver’s door, left front fender, front panel, left side of the front suspension, bumper, headlight, turn signal, and a handful of other parts all needed replacing.

“Misha, it’s impossible to fix this in such a short time,” Osysa said after his inspection.

“Osysa, Valya spoke so highly of you. If it’s about money, name your price — I’ll pay whatever it takes,” Misha said, surprisingly without an accent.

“The problem isn’t the money, it’s the deadline.”

“Osysa, please, think it over. I have no one else to turn to here.”

“Valya, why didn’t you try the AvtoVAZ Center?” Osysa asked, knowing it was along the car’s route.

“We did. No luck — they’re always booked solid. Plus, Misha said something wrong to someone there, so they stopped talking to him altogether.”

Realizing he couldn’t handle the job alone in such a short time, Osysa decided to ask Gleb and Tolya for help. With the three of them, at least there was a chance.

The friends discussed all the details — timing, logistics, and money — and agreed to take on the job together.

“Misha, we’ll take the car, but there’s a very real risk we won’t meet the deadline. We’ve planned for the best-case scenario, but honestly, it’s all hanging by a thread. Let’s just hope nothing unexpected happens. Sometimes it works out, but not often.”

As soon as Osysa named his price, Misha immediately doubled it.

The men exchanged glances — the original amount was already generous, but doubled, it was beyond their wildest dreams.

Hiccups started right from the beginning, making the “thread” even thinner. Andrei couldn’t supply that many spare parts all at once, so Osysa had to visit him three separate times. The crease on the roof took three times longer than planned — the body puller helped, but the door gap kept coming out wrong. The paint booth was scheduled for the fifth day, but the day before had already been promised to the Hanged Man, who could break the “thread” entirely. And, sure enough, he did.

The trio pulled off the impossible — they finished all the bodywork by the end of the fourth day. But the Hanged Man didn’t vacate the paint booth until the morning of the sixth day. Painting and assembling the car in a single day was simply out of the question.

Luckily, help came from Valentina. She hadn’t expected such a turn of events herself, but during a conversation with Fedora’s Grief — whom she occasionally called — it turned out he knew the boss of her friend’s husband well. Prompted by Valentina, Fedora’s Grief somehow managed to persuade him to extend the husband’s business trip by one day. It was like a breath of fresh air for Osysa and Gleb.

The friend's husband's plane arrived at noon on the eighth day, and just an hour earlier that same day, Valentina and Misha received the car. Their joy knew no bounds.