

# **A Dangerously Unconventional View of Canada**

An Interview with Morgan Stone  
Adventurer, Heroine, Misfit

Interviewer - Elena Ivanova

"A Dangerously Unconventional View of Canada"  
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## **Morgan (Meg) Stone**

**Heroine** - In 2006 Meg helped me flee Russia: an increasingly hateful and oppressive country. We started our escape in Kiev, Ukraine, March 2006, and completed it, April 2007, by arriving safely in Victoria, Canada. We'd spent months in hiding and survived a ten month ocean crossing journey in a sailboat.

**Adventurer** - Escaping to Canada with me, has deeply changed Meg and her view of the world. She now sees no other option but to learn, experience and explore the unknown by traveling the world any way possible - by sailboat, plane, train, car or donkey cart.

**Misfit** - As a result of her somewhat "unconventional" activities: saving Russians, exchanging her house for freedom, experiencing the world in unimaginable ways, and living her life the way she wants to, Meg is admired by some people, and ostracized by others.

*"Everything in Canada is designed simply to program people into being happy consumers and be happy, or at least, quiet in their place."*

## **CANADA - IN A FEW WORDS**

**ELENA: You grew up in Canada, you lived there for many years. How would you describe life in Canada?**

MEG: Fake.

**ELENA: Few more words.**

MEG: It's all a show. Everything is artificial, contrived, assigned meaning through ritual and social manipulation: a dismissive term would be "brainwashing." Generally, it's a society in which everyone is worried about what others think of them.

**ELENA: Even in your past life?**

MEG: In my past life, I was one of Julius Caesar's latrine slaves (laughs). Ever notice how everyone's someone famous in their past life: Caesar, Cleopatra, Joan of Arc, Boudicca, Jennifer Lien...? Not me, no sir-eee, someone's got clean up the...

**ELENA: Choomeichka, I'm talking about your life before meeting me in Kiev.**

MEG: Oh yeah, that. It wasn't great, always tense.

**ELENA: What do you think is the reason for that?**

MEG: I really didn't fit in. As I gained sentience and self-awareness, aspects of that way of life made absolutely no sense. My feelings, my sense of logic, was increasingly in conflict with what I perceived and experienced. Life and even the manmade environment was all a show: everybody showing off, "faking it," trying to make it look like they are something better, or at least unique, "special," by being trendy - in other words, all the same.

It is like living on a movie set, or in a theme park: cheap buildings decorated with cheaper materials, stamped out of some factory to "sort-of" resemble something with style or age. The whole, ye olde towne fake Tudor siding, kind of thing. The people are like that too. They emulate behaviors they've been told are trendy, that they've been somehow convinced (programmed) into believing are sophisticated, enlightened, loving, and oh-so-much more aware, than the boorish Americans who act honestly on their own feelings.

Because one's feelings are going to be in conflict with what the over-class needs, which is your attention, vote, labor, and shopping dollars, you are convinced

("brainwashed" there's that word again) to consider your feelings wrong, inferior, fascist, déclassé, un-trendy, whatever terminology works to create that inner conflict. In fact, the society is programmed to enforce that bizarre denial of your own feelings and intuition, through peer pressure. I mean, if you question or don't spew that trendy line, you'll be de-friended on Facebook faster than you can say, "fascist neo-Nazi with bad taste." I mean, come on, this is, "the beer we drink out here," or at least, that's what the mega-corp that sells it, tells us. If you're not drinking it, and saying you like it, even if you don't... well, you might as well be run out of town by the trendoids who hate it, but drink it, and yell the loudest that, "it's the beer we drink out here, and you gotta like it or you aren't one of us!"

Eventually you self destruct, or you see the entire manipulation of society for consumerism by an almost invisible over-class, for what it is. They aren't actually invisible, they just go to tremendous lengths to make the rest of the world invisible to them. "They," of which I speak, are essentially the "upper class." Canada is still, very much, a British hierarchical society. The class structured system hasn't changed since Charles Dickens described it.

### **ELENA: And that's not the case in USA?**

MEG: No, USA is a very different place. It doesn't have the same flavor of overlords -ultra elite. In USA the Ultra Elite are more like celebrities, the media elevates them to movie-star status. They are very visible. In Canada they try to remain invisible to the throngs their money owns and manipulates. They are the CEOs of companies, bankers, investors, politicians, heirs, and those that married extremely well. They are the very rich, the elite.

Canada's got its media, like the CBC (and every other publication that isn't deemed fascist, or conservative). The media and pretty much everything else in Canada is mandated to program people into being happy consumers, or at least quiet, and "in their place." One is programmed to believe it is bad to think above your station in life. Competition, excellence is bad, but it's good to be mediocre, question nothing, loath your doubts, buy lots of stuff, and pay lots of taxes.

Another thing about Canada - it's all about who you know, not what you know. It's all connections, it's all patronage and graft. I believe Canada is easily as corrupt as, say, Russia or Mexico. The difference is that Russia and Mexico are honestly corrupt, as in: "yeah, we are corrupt, so what?" In Canada it's, "We love you. Oh, we care so much and you are a better person because you eat this shit." In the meantime, behind your back it's, "screw you!"

**ELENA: And you had experiences like that?**

MEG: Of course, it's a way of life. Not only that, I used to be rich. I used to be comfortably well-off without knowing it, questioning it, so the contrast is particularly clear to me. I came from a rather invisible, safe (wealthy) family.

*"They either don't know I exist, or wish I didn't."*

## FAMILY, RAISING GOOD CONSUMERS

**ELENA: Could you describe your family in a few words? What kind of people are they?**

MEG: My family? You're it, and the special friends we've met on our travels. If you're talking about the people I grew up with, that I am biologically related to; the only connection is shared DNA. They either don't know I exist, or wish I didn't.

As for my immediate family:

Father, dead. He was a successful doctor, medical researcher, won awards, was head of a university medical school... blah blah blah. Yeah, he burned the house down and then he killed himself.

One of my sisters was a drug addict, I think she was a hooker too (really don't know, I got that from my father, a psychopathic alcoholic who elevated family dysfunction to a form of high art). She got intervention'ed, sent to some born-again-Christian school, found Jesus, and then died of cancer. Mom built a shrine to her in the dining room, makes pilgrimages to places she'd been.

My other sister is a money seeking missile, had already bagged the Prime Minister's son, then she met an oil tycoon, had him in nuptials a couple weeks later, and netted herself billions. She's since decided she's gay and shackled up with a famous, lesbian, country singer. The tycoon abandoned Calgary for the UK when his blond trophy wife (my sister) dumped him for another woman. Ouch, that has got to hurt! Point is, a lot of people who've had contact with what's left of my nuclear (perfect word) bio-family are either dead, or as far away from Calgary as they can get.

My mom is awfully proud of her daughter - the billionaire, the one that is NOT me. I think money and image are very important to her. I don't mean that in a nasty sense, but simply as an observation. Some people really like haute cuisine, will do anything for it, or love climbing mountains just because they are there. My mom, and the people around her, are really into money (or the perceived "look" of money). It's not bad, it just is as it is. I like my mom. She's probably the sanest of us all. Somehow she survived, actually thrived in that environment, and she still does.

My mom and my sister, they're all that's left of that nuclear family (that went critical and blew itself apart). Years ago, I got as far away from them and Calgary as I could get, changed my name, the whole bit. They are pretty typical of the Ultra Elite: so rich they are invisible. It's like you see their mega-yachts, private jets, staff running around, but you never actually see them. That's no accident.

**ELENA: Why do they thrive, you think?**

MEG: They "thrive," as you say, because they have connections. It's all about who you know and how you can form elite groups - like Binding Multiples (a term coined by Sci-Fi writer, Greg Bear). Sure, they do nothing, and they get paid obscenely for it. They have convinced themselves -- and everyone else, apparently -- that they are worth it, and using their binding multiples, the whole Ultra Elite over-class have indentured everyone else into generating more wealth for them. Nothing new. Charles Dickens had it pegged.

**ELENA: Would you say that life of the rich in Canada is different from the lives of people who are not rich?**

MEG: Of course it is. Those that aren't rich live and exist for those that are. They slave at thankless, spirit destroying jobs to enhance the rich (or their share holders). They are paid only enough to survive. They are made subservient by threats to their subsistence. They live in fear.

The doctrine of fear is instilled right from the first day of school. It's fomenting fear, distrust, and insecurity that ensures conformity, need, doubt. Whether you believe something or not, you are afraid to question it for fear of being outcast. You are told, the question itself will invalidate the reality: Santa Claus is real, or you don't get presents; you gotta believe in god, or you'll die when you flat-line; sell more sweaters at The Gap, and you'll be safe and rewarded; dress like this, spout this slogan, buy this product, or your life is meaningless. It's all about fear.

You are encouraged to denigrate, discount, hate, anyone who questions that doctrine. You are taught to force them into conformity through social and physical violence. What I experienced in school, the way I was being programmed, was in such conflict with what I felt, that during breaks all I could think about was getting away from the school: out of the horror, just to breathe, you know, try to remain sane. I climbed cliffs, or I explored the forest, or I hid somewhere and read.

**ELENA: What did other kids do during those breaks?**

MEG: Not surprisingly, vandalism, theft, violent crime, and drug trafficking were a problem in the vicinity of the school. To deal with it, some brainiac social engineers came up with imposing obligatory-volunteer, team sports called "house leagues." They awarded bonus points if everyone in the class showed up. Of course, this was to encourage kids to forego fire-bombing the playground for supervised volleyball outside of class time. What it really did, was enforce 100% compliance by fomenting class resentment and reprisal toward anyone who, like me, loathed every second in that sociopathic environment, and

just wanted to walk in the woods, or read, or sit in peace. It made me a target of organized class hatred, and school instigated gang-violence. What it came down to was; getting the shit beat out of me, or giving in to a system that valued me (and my life) as nothing but a bench-warmer for someone's stupid plan. This is a pretty good example of how social programming works to ensure conformity, compliance, and consumerism, and not just in junior-high school.

**ELENA: What do you think is the purpose for that?**

MEG: Good consumers make the economy go round. Good consumers buy the products of the companies to make the overlords rich. A good consumer is one whose life is meaningless without the products, or services, of those selling them.

If people questioned their existence, and realized what they are losing, missing, by slaving for an identity defined by the media, or the stuff they buy, they would stop doing this. It would be a disaster for the elite. You wouldn't buy their junk and useless services. You wouldn't need their banks for all your debt. All of that 'stuff' would be superfluous. The overlords would have no means of getting richer. If people, all of a sudden, realized what they are squandering for these trinkets and a really contrived lifestyle - everything would collapse.

*"They are trying to find what's missing by spending millions of dollars buying these trinkets and toys. They don't realize that they are not going to find it that way."*

## **LIVING YOUR LIFE FOR SOMEONE ELSE**

**ELENA: Do you think people can realize what they are losing? That they are losing their lives?**

MEG: They usually do. They usually realize it when it's too late. The trendy term for this horrifying revelation (recognition) - is a "midlife crisis." Take a look around the marina. What do you see? Big yachts that never move, mostly owned by men staring down the other side of that hill at death and they've worked like hell, probably, and their life is meaningless. They are trying to find what's missing by spending millions of dollars buying these floating toys (what they've been programmed to think are displays of affluence). They've got these yachts and they still don't know what's missing. Their days are still just as numbered, they haven't seen their feet in years, their joints and muscles don't work and they realize, holy shit, they just spent their entire life making sure they have the right hockey equipment for their kids, and it meant absolutely nothing - they have angina, and the kids are making meth in the basement.

In the neighborhood I grew up in, people left their garage doors open on Sundays, so others can drive around and look in to see what kind of cars and stuff they have. If you have so many cars you can't get them all into the garage - that's even a better thing. It's like that guy in Los-Angeles we knew, the one with at least nine cars.

In Calgary, there are all these ski resorts around that sell you an expensive tag - paper and wire thing that dangles on your jacket zipper - that proves you paid admission to the ski hill. The point is kids, actually grown-ups too, wear the tags forever. They wear those lift tickets on their jackets like badges of honor. Even though the lift ticket expires at the end of the day, they leave them there like, "Oh, I just accidentally left that on my jacket." It says I can blow a hundred bucks to go up and down a hill.

**ELENA: So people never grow up? Never realize what life is about?**

MEG: I don't think they ever do. Some might, but are so caught up in it by then that there is no choice but to carry right on. I like to think that there are people who, maybe, stumbling from the yacht club bar to the SUV in the dark, look up and see the stars, and think, maybe those doubts, those conflicts they feel with their programming, mean something.

**ELENA: Why do you think they never do?**

MEG: Because they are convinced not to. They are afraid of losing everything, losing safety, respect, family, love... you name it, anything that's been commercialized and had its revenue streams maximized, they are afraid of losing it. Besides that, there's others more qualified than you to do your thinking for you, and hey, there's is stuff on TV to watch. I mean, how ostracized will you be if you can't discuss the latest sitcom with your Facebook friends? And mostly, and this is huge: because it's easier to be unaware of the world, the finality of life, what you are missing, and just live for instant gratification and adulation.

**ELENA: How would you say USA is different from Canada?**

MEG: First off, USA and Mexico are definitely the gorgeous parts of North America. USA is beautiful: vast, with incredible deserts, forests, mountains, geology. It has a climate that lets you out of the car or mall more than two weeks a year. Mexico has jungles, deserts, ruins, beaches, coral reefs and an actual culture.

Canada, on the other hand, is just taiga and steppe. It's got some mountains in it, but so what? They are expensive as hell, owned by the elite, and pretty much off limits to everyone but. Mostly, Canada is flat, gray, frozen, fake and boring, with the only culture being fear and consumerism.

**ELENA: Do you see any difference in governments?**

MEG: Of course - the American government is far more accountable. It's also a different system - it's not British parliamentary, it's not British common law, it's not based, nearly as much, on graft and patronage as the Canadian one is. In the American government, I do believe, there is a chance you can get elected on your merit rather than being heir positions either by birthright, who you know or who you can buy.

**ELENA: How would you say Americans are different from Canadians?**

MEG: Generally, Americans are not living in fear. They don't tend to be driven by hatred and contempt. I find that Americans are open. They open their hearts to you, no matter what. You don't have to be afraid of them. The hardest thing for me to grasp, when I am outside of Canada, is not being afraid of people.

In Canada, like in Russia, there is this pervasive feeling of mistrust, scheming, and guardedness. It feels like the underlying motivation of every interaction is "How can I get you? How can I hurt you? How can I put you down to make me look good?" The difference in that between Russia and Canada is much the same difference in their governments, in Russia people are honest about their mistrust and contempt for you; they

don't hide it. In Canada, it's the same toxic, psychological power struggle in every interaction, conversation, but it comes out more like: "Oh hiiiiii, I've missed you! How have you been? I love your shoes, where did you get those?" When, in fact, what has been said is: "You again! What a loser, your proximity makes me look bad. Yuck, those shoes! Thank God, I can spend more money than you."

**ELENA: So they do it to look good?**

MEG: It's inherently a game. Every interaction is a challenge, a provocation, a trap. You look for a way to humiliate someone, and then bad mouth him behind his back.

**ELENA: You must have met good people in Canada. People can't all be bad. I've met good people in Canada, I know they are there.**

MEG: I guess... maybe. It would have been people I never really got to know. Joe Clarke and his wife Maureen McTeer seemed nice, we met them trying to figure out the parking meters in that lot off Wharf Street. Then there was that gas-jockey at the filling station on Fort Street - nice kid.

I know what you mean, and sure, there are people whom we both know, that we'd consider genuinely good people (apart from Mr. Clark, Ms. McTeer, and the gas-jockey, of course). We know them; there is no ulterior motive, no games in our interactions and mutual concern between us. There are exactly THREE people, we've decided after careful consideration, that we'd bestow the honorific of "good people" upon: one is a Catholic nun, the other two are immigrants.

**ELENA: What are immigrants in Canada like?**

MEG: Immigrants tend to form their own expatriate societies when there are enough of them to be a significant segment of the local population. Look at the Chinese in Vancouver. They have Canadian passports and Canadian citizenship but they are still as Chinese as the day they arrived. And why not? They have a culture, they came with it. Canada has no culture. Why assimilate? Assimilate what?

**ELENA: So when you talk about Canadians you talk about people who were born in Canada?**

MEG: Yes, immigrant populations are different. Culturally, they are countries within Canada. The propaganda about Canada is that it's multicultural - it's absolutely not multicultural.

**ELENA: What is it then?**

MEG: It's a collection of enclaves sharing an economy, government, and infrastructure. Now there is a huge influx of Syrians: Muslims. Ostensibly, they are being brought into Canada because they are available. It's just plain good luck that they are refugees. The optics on the refugee thing work perfectly with the current, "we are so much better than America and bad Trump, baaaad" social programming. It eliminates the need for actual critical thinking. The reality is, Canada seriously needs immigrants to counter a falling birthrate, bolster the consumer base and ensure an expanding economy. Good media optics are very important, and "poor refugees" and pandas (did I just say "pandas" - yay, cute panda bears, panda panda panda - there, I just boosted SEO of this site and document through the roof) aren't just an easier sell than economics, they are actually a ratings boost!

Everything in Canada (cute panda) is about image and social programming. I call it "social engineering" (actually a hacking term - but human beings: same as computers, and society: same as an operating system. Just need to know how to use it, and the elite certainly do -- happy panda, kittens).

**ELENA: What would you say is the reason why so many people want to move to Canada?**

MEG: (Cutie panda cubs) Because they think it's the Golden (panda) mountain, they think it's a back door to America (ooh, bad Trump, sad panda). Mostly because it is better than where they are. If you were in Syria or Iraq with Islamic State throwing your friends, family or even you, off buildings, you would want to be in Canada too. It would look pretty good, pandas or no pandas.

*"One will probably do okay in Canada as long as they don't stand out, as long as they are completely ordinary, they re-spew the propaganda, they have no opinions, they are trendy."*

## **TURNING A PERSON INTO A DESPERADO**

**ELENA: You have a theory about the Canadian government turning a person into a victim/a desperado, tell me about it.**

MEG: The easiest explanation is one in which a client falls victim to a government worker botching a form, ignoring a request, shoving it to the bottom of a pile, or out right misplacing the paperwork. Regardless, it comes down to disregard and incompetence leaving the client in a compromised position. Disregard, incompetence and contempt are endemic, pretty much, taken for granted, within the public service. Mostly, public union employees just don't care about their clientele and see them as a nuisance, at best. In the worst case, you get sadistic personality types drawn to the very jobs that enable them to extract pleasure in victimizing others.

You see, powerful unions entrench the lowest common denominator, eliminate accountability, and foment hatred among their members, so absolutely nothing gets done to correct mistakes or malfeasance. The usual modus operandi is to ignore it, pass it on, or blame it on the client, and hope it goes away. If the client requesting the service is still in need of that service they make the request again, this time, compromised in some way, like not having the required documents the government lost with the first request, or now being behind a submission deadline. The second request for this service will then be complicated due to the failure of the first request, meaning whichever government worker receives it will be put-out and conveniently lose it, pass it on to the next union member with less seniority, or find a way (or manufacture one) to reject it.

By this time the client is seriously compromised and perhaps speaks up, wanting to know why his or her request for service has been botched, and requests that the mistake be corrected and the service provided. Of course, this generates immediate hostility within an organization that, by its union mandate can never be wrong, or make mistakes, or be held accountable.

It's then imperative for government workers to ensure that the original mistake, which by then has probably been forgotten, or the persecution of this client, is buried under a mountain of Catch-22 like red tape, forcing the client into ever worsening positions, which then become a feedback loop, making it harder, if not impossible, to ever get the service they requested, and which may actually be vital. Whether it's a planned-for outcome, the victim is forced into some pretty risky, drastic, possibly illegal, situations just to survive. Someone's life is destroyed, and probably all because some

pissed off, jaded, public-service union member had to end her two hour smoke-break to put a rubber stamp on the poor sods form.

**ELENA: Why not just fix the mistake in the first place?**

MEG: Because that would be an admission of guilt. Besides, they probably wouldn't know how, and it would be just too much work and inconvenience. And why bother? It's not like whoever is responsible can be held accountable.

**ELENA: What kind of person is more likely to become a victim of government disregard and incompetence?**

MEG: I think anyone relying on government is at risk. Of course different government departments carry a higher level of hatred for their clients than others, so it depends on which government departments you're dealing with. For instance, departments that don't have anything to do with people, like transportation, or resources operate in a downright professional manner and dealing with them can be disarmingly pleasant. On the other hand, dealing with something that provides a service to individuals is an absolute nightmare for the most part. Departments and programs like, health, education, passports, immigration - oh wow, immigration is about the absolute worst, probably because they are dealing with disempowered, disadvantaged clientele, as in: not citizens - act with absolute contempt - if not outright sadism - toward their clients.

**ELENA: Once somebody has become a victim is there a certain group of people that can fare better in the situation than others?**

MEG: Of course: Rich, white, male. Having money and quick access to lawyers, a network of connected friends, and a plan B: not actually being reliant on whatever service it is you're asking for, will certainly go a long way toward preventing you becoming a victim. For instance, let's say you find yourself getting screwed by someone who decides it's easier to make up a way of rejecting your form rather than dealing with it. No problem: you pick up the phone and call your lawyer (expensive but effective), or you phone a friend who happens to know somebody who knows somebody, or you mention it on the golf course or at the country club, and the problem somehow goes away. Why would this happen? Simple, connections into whatever ministry or department is screwing you, and some supervisor is made aware of the fact that a particular screwing-up will not be ignored and might become more work later on. In other words, the client interface of government will do whatever it can get away with, or whatever is less work.

Anyone who doesn't have those advantages, essentially are not the upper class, will - if they find themselves falling through the cracks, victim of a public service screwup, somehow already disadvantaged or compromised - be pretty much, totally fucked.

**ELENA: Is there a way for these people to fight for themselves?**

MEG: No, not really. Unless they're homeless, and have pretty much lost everything, they won't get legal aid, so lawyers are not an option. I guess, the only thing they can try is to go to the media. Then again, stories of the disadvantaged being victimized by government are so ubiquitous they're not going to sell advertising space on the evening news, and of course, the Canadian media, for whatever reasons - who in hell knows? - won't do anything that casts the government in anything but a glorious, pure, magnanimous, and ever-loving light; probably afraid of losing broadcast licenses, or suck-up points.

Hard to imagine what these people can do. Form grassroots advocacy groups, maybe... Then again, these people are pretty preoccupied with survival. The society is programmed to attack and further victimize, unfriend, ostracize, lionize, demonize, whatever... anyone who doesn't re-spew the government propaganda of a loving, benevolent utopia. Canadians are pretty well trained to accuse victims of bringing it on themselves. I mean, how could anyone possibly be victimized in Canada? Obviously, they deserved it!

**ELENA: Are you serious? You mean people think the poor sods deserve it? Brought it on themselves?**

MEG: It's kind of a mindset in Canada. Excellence is denigrated, and victimization is seen as failure. One will probably do okay in Canada as long as they don't stand out, as long as they are completely ordinary, they re-spew the propaganda, they have no opinions, they are trendy. Tends to be that anyone outstanding, with anything valuable to offer or contribute, runs like the wind for USA. On the other end of that spectrum, anyone who becomes victimized, falls through the cracks, shows any sort of distress, is pretty much destroyed by the society.

A good analogy is swimming with sharks. You've seen pictures of scuba divers calmly swimming along, inside a school of hammerhead sharks. It really is no problem to swim with sharks, but if you show signs of distress, or if you bleed, they will rip you to pieces. It's called a feeding frenzy. The fact is, sharks don't notice you unless you are in distress, meaning you are easy prey, meaning you are dinner.

Sharks will even eat each other. For instance, let's say there is a family of sharks. They are a blissfully happy shark family and barely notice each other until one of the

sharks brushes up against a government barnacle and starts to bleed. The other sharks smell this blood and shriek, "victim, victim," which really just means "dinner" in shark language, and they rip the victim to shreds. Any little bits left floating around are then hoovered up by the barnacles, which are filter feeders, after all. And life goes on, it's the Canadian way.

The sharpest (and closest to bone) example of this sort of victimization is your own. Sure, it's gone on for ten years, in various forms starting with Immigration Canada actually, fucking-losing your application for a refugee hearing, and then sending documents to the wrong places, screwing-up just about everything they could, including sending the wrong person's papers with your citizenship application to the judge which required us to bleed money to lawyer-up and un-screw it, and it's still sitting in limbo. Like: right, Canada really wants some lesbian, Russian refugee, who's not afraid of the media, got nothing to lose, and that they've totally fucked, to get citizenship, rights and a VOTE. Hilarious.

Point is, after all that, they pretty much counted on you curling up and dying, or at least cleaning toilets, slinging fries, nannying their hydrocephalitic offspring, or shilling t-shirts, for the rest of your earthly-born days, but you had the audacity of not only living your life, and taking it back, but living it well! It just doesn't happen in Canada. The overlords were here first, and they sure as hell don't cotton to some upstart immigrant, aspiring to anything beyond her proper place: "the help."

Whether Canada is discriminating against you because you are LGBT, or self sufficient, or not looking like a typical "refugee" in front of the TV cameras, or the spouse of someone whose sister is one of the wealthiest gold-diggers in the known universe, isn't really the point. What is the point, is that until the travel document renewal, despite everything they've done to fuck you up, you aren't dead yet! So when your poor request for a government service to which you are entitled, crossed some petty, pissed-off, unionized government worker's desk, and he/she saw that - despite all the obstacles they've thrown at you - you have been living pretty well, the government worker likely snarled, "This Ruski, muff-diving, refugee bitch is living better than me!" and hurled your renewal application into the farthest corner of the room.

So after 2 months, you demanded to know what was going on, and told them them that your current document was about to expire, leaving you compromised. This was probably your big mistake: like cutting yourself shaving while swimming with sharks. They knew they could get you. You were vulnerable, dependent on them, and all they had to do was stall until your current travel document expired. It made you illegal in a foreign country, stripped you of any possibility of getting out of the country you had become

illegal in, prevented you from getting on a commercial flight, and not becoming a fugitive. In other words, you went from bad to worse, leaving you without a hope in hell of ever getting the problem solved. By then it was either a game to screw you more, or was just too complicated for them to fix, or too much trouble. That's kind of where you fell through the cracks.

When you didn't lie down and die, and forced the issue, leaving them no choice but to deal with it, it was probably too much work for them, or too complicated, so they manufactured a reason to reject your application. In this case, they conveniently lost one of the passport photos. I figure they thought that was brilliant, and probably laughed themselves sick on a smoke break out by the dumpster, dazzled by their fiendish cleverness. They could eliminate the problem by you either getting arrested, getting killed, or getting so tired of their games that you just give up, drop out, go underground, or turn to a life of crime.

By coming up with such a clearly contrived reason for rejecting your application they were telling you, in no uncertain terms, that they could do whatever they wanted to hurt you, with total impunity. On the plus side, it wasn't as messy as waking up in bed beside a severed horse's head. Now you were illegal, unsafe, compromised. Every subsequent request for this service was going to be tainted by your victimization and sabotaged in an attempt drive you into desperate, and hopefully illegal, or even deadly, situations to shut you up, and point the finger at you, and away from them.

Of course, there's also the ugly pleasure people get from hurting someone else, and the increased zeal with which they go at it when they smell blood. It's not just a government thing, but societal. Fall through the cracks, and you're fucked. It's the Canadian way. It's the product of a society built on elitism, victimization, contempt and fear.

**ELENA: After a year of fighting and six attempts they finally gave me the travel document in a matter of hours. Why did they do it you think?**

MEG: Mostly because we had a lot of media attention and it was getting embarrassing for them, and because we had jumped through every single hoop like heroin crazed poodles and they simply couldn't find a way to deny you the travel document.

**ELENA: Is this example of victimization pretty typical, something one can expect from the government in Canada?**

MEG: Absolutely. Although, I think we've held on way longer than most. I'm sure there's countless cases like this that are as extreme as ours. But for the most part, victims are

long gone, lives, families, dreams wrecked, by the time it gets to the point it did with us. We just didn't let the bastards wear us down, but, as you know it's not over yet, and it's been one hell of a long and horrible fight just to get what we are owed.

**ELENA: Have you seen others survive?**

MEG: Frankly, no. I've met a lot of people who are on the run, hiding. Pushed into alcoholism, living in cars... living on boats! The prisons are probably full of people who fell through the cracks, or were pushed through, and to survive, crime and criminals, other marginalized/victimized people were their only support or means of survival. I think there is a lot of suicide.

**ELENA: Do you think we will survive? If so, how?**

MEG: Hah! These words will probably outlast us. I hope we have an answer for that question that we can look back on. Even better if we can look back on it and laugh uproariously. You know, the kind of laughter that is so crazy and out of control, you break ribs and puncture a lung before you cry yourself into a coma. As you know, and as we have discussed at length and usually in a storm of tears, anger and fear, we'll survive. Even if it kills us. Nothing, nobody, can hurt us, but us. We won't let anyone turn us against ourselves for anything, for anyone, for any reason. We won't give up, give in, be victims, take shit, just because it's easier and let's some bastard off the hook to hurt others. We will live for us. We will stand up for our hearts. We will defend our love and our freedom. We will do what's right for us, because we are taking back our lives, because that is really all, you, or I, or anyone has got.

*"Apparently, doing a job too well, or too fast, makes everybody else look bad and that is frowned upon."*

## A FEW WORDS ON A GOVERNMENT JOB

**ELENA: Do you know what a government job in Canada is like? Can you give me some examples?**

### AN ACCOUNTANT'S STORY

MEG: Sure, I had a friend who worked as an accountant for a government department. When she got the job she was over the moon with excitement, clicking her little heels together, crying out for all to hear that she would be rich, rich, I tell you, and never work another day in her life. Well, that lasted for about four hours on her first day, I think it was a Monday.

She got some kind of assignment for the week, it was supposed to be done the next Friday, and she had it all finished and wrapped up by 10:30 Monday morning. She asked for more work and got reprimanded. Apparently, doing a job too well, or too fast, makes everybody else look bad and that is frowned upon. She asked if she could leave early for lunch then, and was told she couldn't, but she had to sit in her office and look busy in case a supervisor showed up.

Turns out, her desk, with a computer on it, was up against the wall opposite the one with the ethernet and phone jacks. Instead of doing research with the computer, connected to the Internet or the local area network, all she could do was play solitaire. She asked for some help to move her desk and computer against the proper wall so she could plug it into the ethernet. She was told that wouldn't happen and there was nobody available from buildings and grounds to move the desk for at least a week. She didn't even ask if there would be somebody available from IT services to plug the computer into the local area network. Instead, she went back into her office, took everything, including the computer, off her desk and placed it on the floor, took out the drawers, moved the desk across the room to the other wall, put everything back, plugged in the computer, logged into the network, and was just about to get into some research when a large burly union representative from buildings and grounds was at her door screaming at her about violating various rules, and she had another reprimand coming. All of this before lunch on her first day.

Let's just say that by the end of that week, my poor, beleaguered friend was no longer working a government job and had herself a position, for one third the pay, in the private sector. It's safe to say, she was a much happier camper after that.

## A TEACHER'S STORY

MEG: Another friend of mine, a teacher, became a pariah amongst the teaching staff when she mentioned that her students needed updated textbooks. No money for textbooks! Was the response. When she suggested that the staff room didn't actually need new carpet, she was reprimanded by the administration for the simple fact that if they didn't use up their carpeting and building tiddling-up fund, they wouldn't get as much next year. That made sense in a very Canadian way, so she mentioned that the five-year-old staff room rug didn't look like it needed replacing, but the 25-year-old abomination of a rug (a wall-to-wall biohazard) in the kindergarten and preschool classrooms could certainly use replacing. Let's just say, that didn't go over well, and my friend was uninvited and unwelcome at TGIF's in the beautifully re-carpeted staff room, forevermore.

Teachers unions are second in omnipotence and power only to government unions. And they are called teachers unions for a reason, they are there for the teachers, not the students. Don't forget, the children, the students, are the clients. In any sort of union situation the clients are always the enemy.

The union was pretty much what did it in for my friend, the teacher. Finished off her teaching career in Canada. By the time she'd been there for a number of years all she could think of doing was getting out. You see, she was interested in teaching. It had always been her lifelong dream to teach, to impart knowledge, to mold young minds into active learners, not to get rich, show off and bicker with her colleagues.

Her worst brush with the union was over strikes. You see, the teachers unions in Canada cause a strike every two years. The union demands more money for teachers (already the highest-paid in the known universe), and even if demands are met, there still always seems to be a strike. I think it's some kind of entrenched, hidden ritual, biennial vacation. Sort of like postal strikes around Christmas.

My friend thought she was getting paid enough already, and wasn't interested in striking. Well, they threatened her physically if she dared to enter the school building, and they threatened her verbally and threatened to withdraw her union membership if she didn't strike, which means she wouldn't be allowed to be a teacher, (that's another really stupid thing, the union won't let anybody work for the school board if the school board hires a single nonunion teacher) yeah, there's a word for that. Instead they just wouldn't give her any strike pay but she could stay at home or stay away from the school.

**ELENA: How did it all end?**

MEG: She got a job teaching for half the pay at an international school in the developing world. No union, great students, she's not in Canada, and she's happy. She feels like she's making a contribution and she's living her dream.

*"As I recall, they cycled through the psych ward like it was some kind time-share vacation property."*

## **HAPPY CANADIANS**

**ELENA: Have you met happy people in Canada? If so, why were they happy?**

MEG: Sure, my father was happy, when he wasn't liquored up and psychopathic. Then again, maybe he was happy then too. He was Slavic: loved misery; turned it into a narcissistic form of high art. But when he was lucid, he seemed happy. He made a ton of money, was a doctor, scientist, and had a university position. He was upper middle class: well-off. Not, obscenely rich, like my sister, but safe and comfortable - well respected.

**ELENA: Why was he happy?**

MEG: I think he loved the admiration of his peers, the neighbors, the hotel clerk, his patients, his lab technicians, his students. He was a doctor, he was a man with some money, he was big-man-on-campus... he was God. He could prescribe solutions to the sick. He could solve problems with money, or by saying, "eh hem, perhaps you don't know who you are speaking to..." Other than when he was polished, sobbing about his hard life, accompanied by tunes from Jesus Christ Superstar and Man of La Mancha, he was happy. Then again, I think that made him happy too.

I think my father's friends were pretty happy. They were all doctors. They had money, they had wives who didn't work, they all golfed and hung out at country clubs and guffawed a lot and slapped each others backs.

I think a lot of the kids I knew were happy. We were in a pretty affluent neighborhood, so it was safe, nobody was starving, or discriminated, everyone got what they wanted, so kids seemed happy. But then again, they were kids, not a worry in the world. Time and worries didn't exist for them.

**ELENA: Were women happy?**

MEG: The women in my socio-economic class (the Marilyn French types) were miserable. You'd think they had it all, but they were a seriously upset bunch. As I recall, they cycled through the psych ward like it was some kind time-share vacation property. First time the disappearance of my friends' mothers for "little vacations" really made sense, was when my own mother suddenly went berserk at the breakfast table, and emptied the coffee pot on her head! My dad, bundled her up and took her to the hospital with him.

By the time I was in high school, I realized teenagers weren't really happy. Most of them did drugs and drank. They were vicious and angry; being cruel, violent and

destructive was just a way of fitting in. The anger was unbelievable. They set a dark skinned girl on fire with gasoline. They slashed the teachers' tires. If they found a bicycle anywhere near the school they destroyed it. They ripped up gardens. Spray painted FUCK YOU on everything. It was just a way of getting along, of fitting in. They beat each other up, really violently. Being slurred as gay, or native Indian, or Asian, or having socialist parents, or Jewish, or Ukrainian, or smart - geeze, even getting good grades - and you'd be beaten and attacked. There were a lot of suicides. One kid blew his brains out with a shotgun.

**ELENA: It all was happening in your school in Calgary?**

MEG: Yes.

**ELENA: What about minorities, like you said, Asian or Indian, or black people? Were they happy?**

MEG: Black? I never actually saw a black person until I left Canada. As for other visible minorities, I have no idea. They were there, but kind of invisible. My dad had an East Indian doctor running his research lab. She was my dad's head of research and needed a TV. My parents suggested I give an old TV I had in my bedroom to this woman because she need one. Then the weirdest thing happened - this woman wanted to thank me and she invited me to her place for dinner. I know this is off topic, but it's probably a pretty important observation about life in Canada, so (panda) bear with me.

She is a doctor, and Ph.D. She is from India. She is running a pretty major research lab and program with millions in research grants. She has Ph.D candidates and technicians under her and my father signing his name to all the journal articles and research papers... and her place... it was a three-story walk-up in a not really swank part of town. I show up for dinner, and there was my old junky TV, it was all she had. She couldn't afford a new one! She couldn't afford anything but the rented flat and a subsistence lifestyle. Sure, she could survive, but she sure wasn't going to own real estate, or have her own tenured university position, or medical practice south of the Arctic circle. That was really the first time I had ever been exposed to that class system that doesn't officially exist in Canada.

**ELENA: Why wouldn't she have a tenured university position or medical practice?**

MEG: I'm pretty sure she was teaching, but as an assistant to my dad. She would never be tenured because she wasn't part of the club.

**ELENA: What club?**

MEG: The old-boys-club: the rich white guys (like my dad) who were there first, and decide who joins their ranks, and who runs their labs or cuts their lawns, or cleans their toilets. It really is all about who you know, not what you know, and there are unwritten rules about who gets in and who doesn't. It's also vital to keep people like my dad's head of research impoverished so they don't get power, connections, or time to become competition for those in their comfortable, safe, places, like my family was.

**ELENA: That was some time ago, what is the situation for immigrants like now? Have you had any encounters with immigrants lately?**

MEG: I have, indeed. Went to see a doctor for a prescription refill at a walk-in clinic. Turns out this doctor, an older and clearly, well educated woman, originally from Southeast Asia, had come to Canada 15 years earlier during the Sri Lankan Civil War.

She'd been a medical specialist in Sri Lanka for 15 years, before she fled civil unrest at home and became a refugee in Canada. Arriving in Canada, she discovered that her specialized and higher education was not recognized. Although Canada had a desperate need for her skills and medical specialty, she wasn't allowed to practice medicine in any respect. She had to literally go through medical school again, while supporting herself along the way with menial jobs for years.

I asked her why she wasn't a practicing specialist in her field, rather than writing script for sniffles and coughs in a walk-in clinic above a grocery store. The answer: although she had over 15 years of experience in her specialty, no medical school in Canada would let her intern - redo a residency in her field - favoring the locals, the club members, the kids of the old-boys-club members, the non-immigrants, you know..., first. With a bunch of debt, no prospects, and getting older after years in menial service, her only option was to go into business with a walk-in clinic.

**ELENA: Why did she open up to you?**

MEG: Because I asked. Your situation is pretty forefront in my list of concerns, and there was this doctor, run ragged, and of an age I would expect to see a doctor behind an expensive desk in a long-established practice or a specialty, and it was a pretty safe bet from her accent and honesty of expression that she wasn't Canadian to start with.

**ELENA: What do you mean by honesty of expression?**

MEG: No chitchat, probably no time for it. No fake smile. No saccharine, cheery, singsongy, sucking up voice. No hiding the fact that she was ready to sleep on her feet.

No hiding the fact that she wasn't happy. No fear. And by fear I mean the fear of NOT projecting gushing gratitude, narcissistic megalomania, and polished trendiness.

**ELENA: What do you think her life will be like in a few years?**

MEG: Oh wow, I'm glad I'm not her. I can tell you what her life is gonna be like in a few months. The walk-in clinic she's been trying to run, above the grocery store, isn't making enough money to stay open. And she's got more patients than she can handle. The problem is, government health care doesn't pay her enough to cover the rent and operating costs.

**ELENA: Can she charge more?**

MEG: She can't. The government sets what she can charge. The whole system is kind of set up to make sure there aren't that many patients, or at least not that many that get treated, and to keep the cost of medical treatment low by paying very little for medical services. Of course, it also reduces the quality of care, actually, rather dramatically. Then again, that's not a bad thing: people without medical care tend to die; problem solved! Like long wait lists for cardiac surgery or cancer treatment: brilliant plan. Heart disease and cancer, allowed to follow their own natural course over time, almost always result in a beneficial outcome for the government.

**ELENA: So what does it mean? That only reach people can get health services in Canada?**

MEG: Not really. Private healthcare, or not funded by the government, is illegal. It's all about not having a choice, or not allowing it. Everybody's equal, except, some are more equal than others. Obviously, if you've got the means, you have access to healthcare when you need it. Do you honestly think members of the ultra elite clutter up the waiting lists for cancer and cardiac treatment? Of course not, they go to USA. Or, they know someone who knows someone, connections, that sort of thing, and somehow the whole waiting list thing becomes a non-problem.

**ELENA: This doctor from Sri Lanka, that you met, do you think there's anything she can do to actually enjoy her life?**

MEG: I figure she's on 24/7 and she's not making ends meet, now she's on her way to some barren outpost on the Canadian Shield where the biggest excitement is the supply plane showing up with a disproportionate amount of solvents and cleaning supplies. I figure she's dug in pretty deep, stuck on that treadmill, without a lot of hope of getting

off. I think, if I was in her situation, I would liquidate everything I've got, or max out every debt instrument I could get within signing range of, turn it all into cash, stuff it in a knapsack, take up a heading of South Southeast and just start walking.

**ELENA: Did she tell you how she felt about all this?**

MEG: She told me, she didn't make the right decision. I guess she didn't end up dead in the violence, but she's not happy. She told me that if she had to do it over again, she never would've left. She said she misses her family, misses her culture. Says that she gave up everything, including the best years of her life. I asked her what she got for it, she looked around, held out her hands, to indicate the walk-in clinic, and shrugged her shoulders. I think she wants to go home.

*"Question absolutely everything; apply the logic of Occam's razor. Measure your personal worth in units of time left to experience and perceive."*

## LAST WORD - TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

**ELENA: There has to be some hope for Canada, like anywhere in the world. What would you recommend to people in Canada, who want to truly live, experience as much as possible, who want to see beyond what's on TV and in Costco?**

MEG: Get outside your comfort zone. Take risks. Don't play by the rules. Question absolutely everything; apply the logic of Occam's razor. Measure your personal worth in units of time left to experience and perceive. Make a change in the universe. Take a stand. Know what's behind everything: identify the motive in any interaction, communication, trend, media release, product, religion, pitch, tradition, slogan. Know that you and your attention (finite time alive) are a simple commodity to others, but of infinite value to you.

Knowing that, listen to a quartz timepiece... Do you hear that? Tic, tic, tic, tic... those are seconds. They are limited. Your seconds are going to run out and then. Yup, I just ended a sentence with the word "then." Full stop. Nothing matters when those seconds run out because there is no more you. Without you, there is no more universe, no more nothing, no more anything. Think back to before you were born, remember how that felt? You've got something right now. You have YOU. Someday, some second, you won't.

Acknowledge your feelings. Meaning: listen to your heart in the metaphorical sense. Something not quite sitting right? There's a reason for that. Find out what it is. Find out WHY. Remember, the most important thing in life is how you feel. It is your perception. If it is warped or being warped or you are warping it because you have been told/programmed/forced to do so, find out why. Chances are it's to make you a better "something": better consumer, better worker, better wife, better zombie. Recognize that and dismiss it for what it is, then go on doing whatever is better for YOU.

And here's where I would tell you just what it is you need to do! What is best for you. And I'm pretty sure, if you've read this far, you know that only you can know what's best for you.

I can make some suggestions:

- Take your job and shove it
- Turn off the TV
- Toss the I-phone
- Defriend Facebook
- Trashtag Twitter

- Write a letter to the Prime Minister
- Go outside and meet the neighbors
- Cultivate dandelions
- Speak your mind
- Climb a mountain
- Treat yourself with some respect
- Write a novel
- Put what you can carry into a knapsack, leave the keys to your leased car, and mortgaged house, take up a heading walking out the front door, and keep on walking. I can guarantee, you'll have an adventure
- Find like-minded people and...

Save your own life by taking it back!

## **LEARN MORE**

by reading "*Know That You Can be Free*" where Meg talks about: Russia, our planet crossing escape from Russia to Canada, her decision to help me flee, her past and current life, life of a Russian woman, LGBT rights in Russia.

Learn more about our escape from Russia at

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