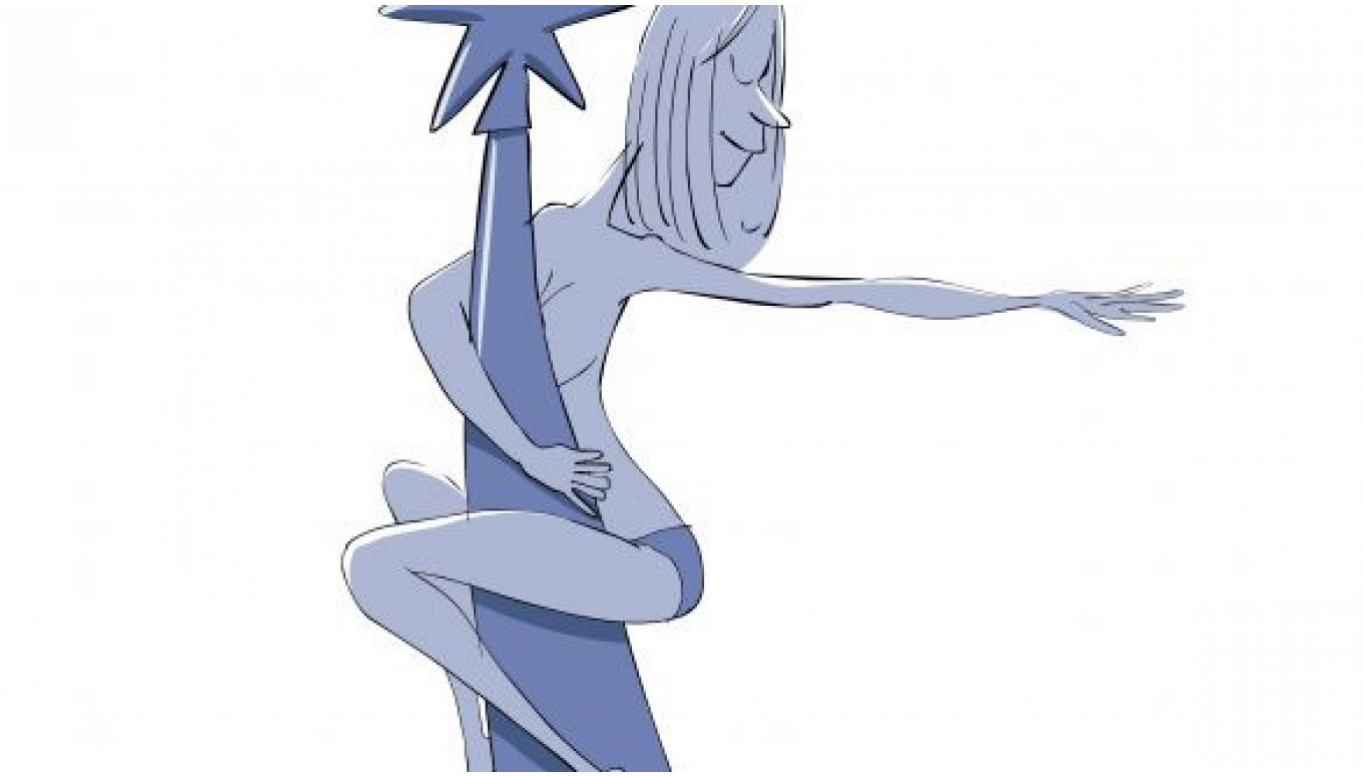
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In the Spotlight: Raunchy Expats

By Anna Malpas

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This week, Deidre Clark, the Moscow expat lawyer-turned-raunchy novelist, is suing her former firm, Allen & Overy, for unfair dismissal and sex discrimination. She is fighting for the case to be heard in a London court after the firm sacked her for gross misconduct, and wants £3.5 million ($5.4 million) in compensation.

Clark, who writes under the name Deidre Dare, was sacked in 2009 after publishing on the Internet a novel about a Moscow expat lawyer's sexual shenanigans that did not go far to conceal her identity, especially as she added photographs of herself in net underwear.

She is suing A&O in a case that is now being considered at a London employment tribunal. The sex discrimination charges relate to her boss allegedly taking against her after they had a brief fling.

Clark wants the case to be heard in Britain, although A&O argues that she is based in Russia — and Russia is not a country where many people win sex discrimination cases. Clark said she should be tried in Britain because she gets her facials there, in an argument that sounds straight out of "Legally Blonde."

The case prompted large amounts of coverage in the British press. Tawdry tabloid The Star called her the "dirty lit lawyer." There were also plenty of pickups in the Russian media, with Newsru.com and Komsomolskaya Pravda insisting that Clark, a New Yorker, is an "English woman."

Journalist and novelist Anna Blundy, who used to cover Russia for The Times, wrote a lengthy opinion piece for The Daily Telegraph about the sex, vodka and hard partying that supposedly go with the expat lifestyle.

Somewhat questionably Blundy argued that "as an English woman in Moscow, it is so lovely to have someone open doors, hold out chairs and light your cigarette for a change; casual sex often seems the least one can provide in return."

I find a thank-you suffices.

Clark is certainly not the first expat woman to have a colorful love life in Russia — I know one British woman who entangled herself with a lion tamer, and an American who dated a famous foul-mouthed rocker. But it's true that her gung-ho attitude stands out, while many are more risk-averse, or maybe just more realistic.

Judging from her Expat novel, Clark hobnobs with wealthy expats from a fairly closed circle but prefers Russian men for their gallant and romantic gestures, even if her companion once threw a glass of whisky at a journalist who joked about his manhood — and missed. Some comments grate, such as her casual generalizations about Russians, despite admitting that she does not know the language.

Nevertheless, everything she writes is pretty tame compared with the Exile, the hard-hearted newspaper where men used to review prostitutes in articles loaded with self-loathing and disgust.

Clark stopped posting the novel online after her firm complained, but you can read a tantalizing synopsis of her next book, pithily titled "Slut." It features a "promiscuous and dangerously unconventional" American investment banker working in Sydney. You can download the whole thing for $3.

She also wrote a sex column in the Moscow News, canceled ostensibly because the content was too explicit for school-age readers — although I bet their English was coming on in leaps and bounds. The column caused controversy when in an ill-judged comment she talked about liking rough sex and appeared to argue that rape could be acceptable.

She still writes an advice column in Passport magazine. She gives a simple solution to an Australian man who complains of a lack of girlfriends. Why not try sleeping with me, she offers, since Australians are all well-endowed.

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