Summary: None given.

Categories: Man From Uncle Characters: Alexander Waverly, April Dancer, Ensemble, Illya

Kuryakin, Illya/Napoleon, Lisa Rogers, Mark Slate, Napoleon Solo, Original

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06/25/2011 Story Notes:

Well, this is my first (completed) story attempt, so please be gentle with me. :-) Any suggestions on how I can improve myself as a storyteller would be gratefully appreciated.

Before you move along to the story, I'd like to thank a few people; C.C. for her knowledge, and Sarah L. for her beta reading (not an easy or enjoyable task, believe me!). But mostly, I'd like to thank Kate D. Not only did Kate beta my story, but she encouraged me every step of the way, offering advice, suggests, and sharing her knowledge and experience (the woman's a saint!). If not for Kate's support, I'd have never had the courage to attempt this. Thanks, Kate!

I guess I have to do the copyright thing now? Okay, IK, NS, Dancer, Slate & Waverly aren't mine, I didn't create 'em. And I'm definitely not making any money from them (in fact, they're sending me happily broke!)

Now, on with the torture. . . I mean story.

Shannon (AKA Illya's Girl. I wish!)

- 1. Chapter 1 by Shannon
- 2. Chapter 2 by Shannon

Chapter 1 by Shannon

"Illya, why don't we go out for dinner tonight?"

"Napoleon, why is it that whenever it's your turn to cook, we end up either eating out, or ordering take out?"

"You've drunk my coffee, right?"

"Please don't remind me," Illya's hand automatically went to his stomach. "I still get nauseous with the memory."

"Well, if you thought that was bad, my cooking is even worse."

The look on Illya's face was one of doubt. "That's not possible."

"Trust me on this one."

"Perhaps I should enroll you in some cooking classes," Illya suggested thoughtfully.

"Illya my friend, you seem to forget that I have the negatives of you and Natasha." Of course both men knew it was a bluff, but they both enjoyed a little bit of silliness every now and then to balance out their dangerous lives. "It wouldn't do much for your painstakingly constructed ice man image, if pictures of you playing with a fluffy little kitten were to mysteriously turn up on the notice board in the cafeteria."

"You wouldn't."

The older man waggled his eyebrows. "Care to place a wager on that."

"Well, just let me remind YOU, my friend, I've yet to unpack all of my things, and my old apartment is still available."

"You're bluffing." Of course he was, and Napoleon knew it, but just the thought of losing Illya after having only truly discovered him, sent a small chill down the older man's spine.

"Try me."

"Ahh, no thanks. You'd probably do it just to prove me wrong, wouldn't you?"

Illya displayed one of his rare wide smiles. "You're learning, Napoleon. At this rate, I should have you fully trained by Christmas."

Napoleon's hand strayed to his lover's face, brushing the silken hair he loved so much from his forehead. "Remind me again why I love you."

"You're a masochist."

"Ah! I knew there was a reason." Giving his partner an affectionate squeeze on the shoulder, the older man moved towards the opening elevator doors and down the corridor that led to Waverly's office, with Illya by his side. *Right where you belong my sexy little Russian.* It was a good thing Illya couldn't literally read Napoleon's mind. The last time Napoleon had used the word 'little' in reference to Illya, the older man had been sore for days. Smiling at the memory, he decided that calling his lover 'little' every now and then could be rather pleasant.

"What do you suppose the old man wants to see us about?" Illya asked, breaking Napoleon out of his R-rated thoughts. "Our previous assignment is all wrapped up. There's nothing left to discuss about it." A particularly nasty thought occurred to him, almost making him stop dead in his tracks. "Surely he wouldn't have changed his mind about allowing us to remain partners?" To any other observer, Illya's face would have appeared calm and disinterested, but Napoleon could clearly see the worry that was hiding behind cool blue eyes.

"Probably a new assignment," Napoleon guessed, trying to not only reassure his lover, but himself as well.

It had been their major concern when they had decided to come out of the closet to their chief less than two weeks ago; being separated, and assigned new partners. Thankfully though, their partnership was one of the most successful ones in U.N.C.L.E. history, and so long as their work remained satisfactory, they would be allowed to remain working together.

"Do you think so? We only just arrived back into the country this morning. Waverly normally gives us a day or two to come down from an assignment, and catch up on paper work before sending us out again."

"Well, I talked to Mark early this morning at the airport while you were collecting the language, and he mentioned that a particularly nasty flu virus has been making the rounds through UNCLE headquarters. Apparently several of our Section Two agents are sick at the moment."

"I hope you and Mark were on a secured line during this discussion. We wouldn't want Thrush hearing about this."

The look on Napoleon's face said it all; What do I look like, a rookie?

"Well, you did leave Shark's two wave radio on," Illya teased.

"Me?! If I remember correctly, you were there too."

"Yes, Napoleon, but you ARE the senior agent, by two years." Illya smiled sweetly.

An almost sensual smile appeared on the older man's face. "And as senior agent, and your superior, I believe you're long overdue for some disciplinary action. Your lack of respect for your superiors is horrendous."

"And what exactly did you have in mind?"

Leaning closer to his partner just as they reached Waverly's office door, Napoleon softly whispered, "I'll tell you later tonight. When we're in bed."

As the office door automatically opened, Waverly looked up to see his two top agents. "Ah, gentleman, take a seat." As the two men entered, and sat down at the revolving tabletop, Waverly's eyes lingered on Illya's face, taking in his red complexion. "Next time Mr. Kuryakin, I suggest you use a sun screen."

"Sir?"

Happy to enlighten his partner, Napoleon pulled out the small pocket mirror he carried and handed it to the younger man. Knowing his lover's red complexion had nothing to do with the sun, his smile widened as Illya's blush reddened even further when he looked into the mirror. Napoleon had always enjoyed making his partner blush, making him look like an innocent little schoolboy, and this particular blush rated an eight point one on the Illya scale.

The look Illya gave Napoleon as he handed the mirror back spoke volumes. Napoleon could almost hear the unspoken warning *Just wait till I get you alone.*

Clearing his throat, Waverly placed a folder on the table, and spun the desktop so that the folder stopped in front of his head enforcement agent.

Opening the folder, Napoleon took in the picture of a middle aged woman with red, greying hair, and steely blue-grey eyes.

"Doctor Paula Marsen, scientist. We intercepted some information late last night that seems to indicate that Thrush wants her dead."

"Marsen?" Illya questioned. "I thought she worked for Thrush?"

"So she did, up until recently. It appears that Thrush didn't approve of her latest experiments."

"Which were?"

"That much we don't know. But if it has Thrush worried, it may be in our best interests if we could find out."

"And do we know where she is?" Napoleon asked, as he flicked through the folder looking for any clues.

"There have been several reported sightings of Thrush agents operating on the west side of town, most likely searching for Doctor Marsen. I suggest you both start there. I want to know what

she is working on, and if it's something we should cultivate, or stop."

"Yes, Sir." Taking the folder in hand, Napoleon stood up, noting that Illya was also standing and heading towards the door.

"Is there anything useful in the file?" Illya asked as they headed towards their shared office.

"No, not really. The information on the Doctor seems rather sketchy. It doesn't even mention what her field of expertise is. How about you? You seemed to recognize the name, and you knew she worked for Thrush."

"I heard her name mentioned several months ago, while I was a guest at Thrush central. She apparently has a well known reputation for hating men."

That piece of news didn't sit well with Napoleon. How was he supposed to use his charms on a 'man hater'? "Really? Is she gay?"

"Why must hating men automatically make her gay?" Illya shook his head in disgust. "Really, you Americans have this annoying habit of pigeonholing people. Having everything and everyone safely labeled."

"This coming from a man who makes sweeping generalizations about Americans?"

"For that you have only yourselves to blame."

The superiority in the Soviet's voice grated on the American's nerves. "Oh really? And how did you come to that conclusion?"

"Have you watched any of the television shows that are on these days? It's one stereotypical American character after another."

"Since when do you watch television?" In the short time Illya had been living in Napoleon's apartment, he couldn't remember his lover ever having watched more than the evening news on the TV.

Before Illya was able to continue the debate, Napoleon's communicator started to beep. Taking the fake cigarette holder from his inside jacket pocket, Napoleon tipped out the communicator from its case, and switched on the send button. "Solo here."

Waverly's voice came drifting out from the small device. "Mr. Solo, we've just intercepted some more news concerning Marsen. It appears that a Thrush agent has found her hideout, down by the docks, and is waiting for backup. I want you and Mr. Kuryakin to get there before his people do."

This should be fun, Napoleon thought, *two men against a squad of Thrush agents.* "Yes sir, we'll leave immediately." Turning off his communicator, and placing it back in its case, Napoleon turned to his partner and smiled. "You know, I still think Waverly is secretly working for Thrush."

Illya returned the smile. "I'm beginning to agree with you, my friend."

Reaching their destination, it didn't take long for them to locate the Thrush agent who had been hiding behind a pile of wooden crates, totally absorbed in watching the commotion that was

coming from one of the warehouses.

Quietly shooting the enemy agent with a sleeping dart, Napoleon and Illya also took refuge behind the crates.

"It looks like the doctor is closing up shop. She must be expecting company," Napoleon surmised, as he watched several pieces of equipment being loaded into a truck.

"Have you noticed, Napoleon, that there are no men?"

"Yep. I make out about ten women. Do you think they'd appreciate a little extra muscle?"

"What do you have in mind?"

Suddenly from behind came the familiar sound of a gun being cocked. "All right gentlemen, kindly place your weapons on the ground, and your hands on your heads."

Slowly turning around, the two agents found themselves the captives of two rather muscular women, holding guns pointed directly at their heads. Napoleon sighed. "Make that twelve women."

Complying with the woman's orders, both men slowly stood up from their crouched positions.

Napoleon cringed. *Waverly's gonna have a field day when he hears about this.*

Within minutes they found themselves tied up and shoved unceremoniously into the back of a truck. One of the women who had captured them was going through their collected possessions, taking particular note of their I.D.s.

"Looks like we have a couple of UNCLE agents on our hands." Taking out the U.N.C.L.E. gun from the waistband of her jeans, she pointed the weapon directly at Illya.

Raising his chin, Illya stared unblinkingly at the woman, refusing to allow any fear to show on his face.

Please let that be my gun, Napoleon silently prayed. While Napoleon's gun had been loaded with sleep darts, Illya's had been loaded with the real thing.

Calmly the woman pulled the trigger. Napoleon's heart stopped for an instant, before his brain was able to categorize the sound the gun made as the comforting noise of a tranquilizer dart. He was still trying to steady his wildly beating heart when the gun was turned on him, and the trigger once again pulled.

Consciousness came back slowly, and with it the realization that his wrists and ankles were chained, and he was lying on a cold metal slab. His clothes, including his underwear, were gone; he was completely naked, with the exception of a bandage over his abdomen.

His head pounding, and his stomach sore, Napoleon slowly turned his head to take stock of the room he was in. Two doors, and no windows. The only piece of furniture in the small room was a large cabinet up against one of the walls. There was another metal slab with chains attached to it, next to his own, but his partner was nowhere to be seen. *Illya, where are you? What are they doing to you?*

It seemed to Napoleon like hours before the door to his cell opened, and two women, one he

recognized as Doctor Paula Marsen, entered the room, wheeling in with them a gurney containing his unconscious partner.

"I see you're finally back amongst the living, Mr. Solo."

"Doctor Marsen, I presume." Calmly looking at the older woman, Napoleon kept the worry for his partner from his voice. He firmly believed in the old adage, 'Never let them see you sweat'. "I take it that your departure from Thrush has nothing to do with you wanting to turn over a new leaf and work for the good guys?"

The very idea brought a grim laugh to the doctor's lips. "A very amusing notion, Mr. Solo. However, I have no intentions of lowering myself by working for any organization run by men."

With very little effort the two women transferred the slim Russian onto the empty metal slab. Like Napoleon, Illya was also naked, and taped to his stomach was a white bandage, which, unlike Napoleon's, was stained with several red splotches.

"You worked for Thrush for ten years," he countered.

Marsen turned her full attention to Solo while her underling began closing the chains around Illya's arms and legs.

"And ten very long years they were." Coming to stand beside Solo, Marsen gave his naked body careful scrutiny. The disgust she felt was barely contained. "Katherine, please see to it that our two lab rats get some warm blankets. If our experiment is to work, we really do need to ensure that they remain as healthy as possible."

"Yes, Doctor." Closing the last iron cuff to Illya's left leg, Katherine slowly raked her eyes over Illya's body before leaving the room.

"It's nice to know you care," Napoleon grinned, trying to ignore the knot of jealousy he felt. No one had the right to look at Illya like that. No one.

"Enjoy it while you can, because once I'm through with the pair of you, I'll no longer need you alive."

As Marsen turned to leave the room, Napoleon made another attempt to gain more information from her. "I'm curious. If you hated your superiors so much, why did you stay with Thrush for ten years?"

"Because I needed their equipment, and their money." Her laughter was dripping with contempt. "They were fools! Only when it was too late, and my experiments a success, did they realize what my true intentions were."

Talk about delusions of grandeur. "I don't suppose you'd care to share those intentions with me?"

"And spoil the surprise? Where's the fun in that? No, you'll have plenty of time to worry about what exactly has been done to you and your partner. I'm sure in the long run you'll find it quite fascinating."

"Somehow I doubt that."

"Cheer up, Solo. Up until now I've only tested my drugs on animals. You and your friend will go down in history as being the first humans to undergo the procedure."

The idea of being human guinea pigs wasn't a pleasant one, but he'd be damned if he'd let this mad scientist see any fear. "I've always been a bit of an exhibitionist, but my partner on the other hand is a little on the shy side. I doubt he'd enjoy the notoriety."

"Your partner needn't worry about that. Neither of you will be around long enough to enjoy your new-found celebrity." Heading towards the door, Marsen was met by her aide, Katherine, carrying two warm blankets.

The older woman paused briefly to dispense her orders before leaving the room. "You know the procedure, Katherine. I want the drug administered every five hours, starting from now."

"Lisa and I will take care of it."

"Good. I want to know the minute they show signs of responding to the drug."

As her boss left the room, Katherine walked over to Napoleon and half-heartedly threw a blanket over his body.

"Thanks," he murmured, as he shook the blanket clear of his face.

Without a word, she then walked over to where the Illya lay, still unconscious. Again she stared intently at his body. Now that the Doctor had left the room, she had the freedom to reach out and stroke the blond hair, and run her fingers down his lean chest, savoring his soft skin before finally covering him with the blanket.

Napoleon watched the scene, biting his lip to keep from telling the dark-haired woman exactly where she could go. He hated his lover's space being violated by the witch, knowing Illya would hate the unwelcomed contact. But if this Katherine had a weak spot for the blond, it could come in handy somewhere down the line.

Once they were alone, Napoleon found himself staring at his partner, watching the steady rise and fall of his chest. "Illya?"

Nothing.

Louder this time, "Illya, wake up!"

At the sound of his name, Illya stirred slightly, but then settled down into a deeper sleep.

"Oh no you don't, Kuryakin, we're in this mess together. Now WAKE UP!" he yelled.

Slowly opening his eyes, Illya squinted in the bright light. "N-Napoleon?" He began to lift his hand to his head, but was stopped short by the chains.

Relief flooded through Napoleon's body. "How do you feel?"

"Awful. I think my head is going to explode," he murmured.

"How about your stomach?"

"I couldn't eat a thing right now."

"You must really be ill," he grinned, "but that's not what I meant. Does your stomach hurt?"

"How did you know?"

"It seems while we were unconscious that the good doctor performed some minor surgery on us."

"Surgery?" His voice sounded faint, and a little shaky. It was obvious that the younger man was still feeling dazed from the knockout pellet, plus whatever else he might have been given. "Why?"

"Your guess is as good as mine. It seems we're to be used as two rather large lab rats."

"For what?"

"I don't know that either. I don't suppose you'd have any ideas as to why Marsen would be poking around inside our stomachs?"

His voice growing stronger. "I'm a scientist, Napoleon, not a medical doctor."

It was nice to hear the sarcasm in the Soviet's voice. Now he KNEW Illya was okay.

As ordered, five hours later Katherine and one of the heavily muscled women who had captured the two agents at the warehouse, entered the room, bringing with them a tray containing a small vial of yellowish liquid and two needles.

Katherine walked over to Napoleon, and started to undo his chains, while the other woman walked over to Illya and pointed a gun to his left temple.

"The bathroom is through that door. You have five minute, and if you make any threatening gestures, your partner's brain will be seeing the light of day. Understood?" Katherine asked as she undid the last metal cuff from Napoleon's arm.

"Clearly." *Damn!* There was no way he could hope to subdue both women before the gun to his lover's head could be fired.

Napoleon pulled the blanket closely around his waist and walked to the door Katherine had indicated. He reemerged four minutes later, feeling much better now that his aching bladder had been relieved. While he was in the small room, he'd also taken a quick look underneath the white bandage. It looked as though a small incision had been made, and then closed up with only a few stitches. For whatever the reason, Napoleon couldn't tell.

Making his way back into the room where his partner was being held at gun point, Napoleon was pleased to see that the two metal slabs he and Illya and been lying on had been replaced by two small, but infinitely more comfortable looking beds. Illya had also been unchained, but still had a gun aimed at his head.

Walking over to one of the beds, Napoleon calmly sat down and passively watched as his feet were chained to the solid iron base of the bed. His hands however remained free, and only when he noticed a tray containing some type of sandwiches and water, did he understand why.

Placing the tray of food on Napoleon's lap, Katherine pulled a gun from the back of her blouse, and pointed the gun at Napoleon. "Now it's your turn, Mr. Kuryakin. You have five minutes."

Illya gave a small nod to his partner before heading to the bathroom. His thoughts much the same as Napoleon's, he quickly relieved himself, washed his hands, and then pulled at a corner of the dressing covering his abdomen. He found much the same thing as his partner had, a small incision, just above his belly button, closed up with stitches.

Exiting the small bathroom, he reappeared just in time to watch as a needle was slipped into his partner's arm.

As the plunger was depressed, Illya closely watched for any negative effects the drug might have on Napoleon. Aside from a slight wince as the needle slipped into his vein and was then removed, Napoleon seemed to be fine.

He knew the chances of getting a straight answer was slim, but he asked anyway. "What's in the needle?"

"Nothing you need to be concerned with," the larger of the two women replied as she stepped over to him. "Back on the bed."

"If you're injecting that stuff into us, I think we have a right to be concerned about it," Illya insisted.

"Your only concern right now is doing what you're told." Pushing the gun muzzle into his back, the women repeated her command, "Now GET on the bed."

With a heavy sigh, he moved over to the vacant bed and sat down. Katherine was quickly at his side, chaining his legs to the bed. Before giving him his food however, she swabbed the inside of his right arm with alcohol. Looking over to his partner, noting that he still showed no adverse side effects to the drug, he forced himself to relax, and watch as the drug was administered. Aside from the pinch of the needle he felt no other pain caused by the dug.

Placing a tray of food in the blond's lap, Katherine stepped back. "As long as the two of you behave yourselves, your arms will remain free. But cause any problems, and you'll find yourselves chained hands and feet back up to the metal tables." As she and her companion headed towards the exit, she turned back around to face the two men. "And just in case you feel like trying to escape, there are cameras hidden in all four walls. Your every movement is being watched." Before closing the door behind her, she reached out and turned off the overhead light, plunging the room into darkness.

"Do you suppose she realized that I hadn't started eating my dinner yet?" Illya asked half-heartedly once the two women had left. More seriously now, "Did you make any surprising discoveries while you were in the bathroom?"

"Small incision just above the belly button. Three stitches".

"Three?"

"Yep. You?"

"Six stitches."

While he couldn't make out the look on the Russian's face, he could clearly hear the irritation in his voice. He smiled. "Always have to outdo me, don't you?"

Five hours later the two men were awakened, and the whole procedure was repeated all over again. As the two women left the room, the light was once again turned out. Obviously it was still night time, although how the two were expected to get a full night's sleep when they were being used as pin cushions every five hours was anyone's guess.

Once again on the verge of sleep, Illya shook himself awake and turned his head towards his partner. Something didn't feel right. His eyes adjusting to the dark, he realized that Napoleon was

clutching his stomach tightly.

"Napoleon, are you all right?"

In response to his question, he heard a low moan emanate from his partner's throat. Sitting straight up, Illya tried to leap out of bed before realizing that his feet were still securely fastened to the bed frame. Before he could call out for help, the door was slammed open and the room flooded with light. An older woman, Doctor Paula Marsen, Illya noted, raced into the room, followed closely by two other women."

"Damn it," she cursed as she quickly took stock of the agent's condition. "His body is rejecting the implant. I want him in the operating room, and prepped for surgery immediately." Racing out the door to prepare for the operation, Marsen left behind the two women.

"What's happening to him?" Illya demanded to know, as Napoleon's bed was being wheeled out of the room. "What have you done to him?"

Both women ignored his demands, and soon Illya found himself alone, not knowing whether or not his partner, best friend and lover was going to live or die. Giving no thought to his own condition, Illya offered up a silent prayer for his lover's safety.

Illya was still awake, when two hours later the door was opened, and Napoleon was wheeled back into the room. He looked pale and haggard, with an I.V. attached to his arm, but to Illya it was the most beautiful sight he had ever seen.

"Is he going to be all right?" Illya asked the dark-haired woman who had wheeled in his unconscious partner.

Wheeling the bed into place, Katherine turned her attention to Illya. Seeing the look of concern and fear for his friend etched into his face, she found herself having to curb the desire to run her fingers through his hair and reassure him. Steeling herself, she replied, "The question you should be asking is 'Am I okay?' Understand this, Solo's body rejected the implant. Doctor Marsen will want to run a few tests to try and ascertain why it didn't work, but after that he'll no longer be useful. Your only hope of living a while longer is if your body doesn't also reject the implant. So long as you're still useful, Solo will be kept alive in order to keep you in line. So if I were you, I'd comply with everything you're asked to do, and pray that your body is more accepting than your friend's."

"Implant?" His eyes widened. "What exactly did Marsen do to us?" He reverently hoped that the panic welling up inside him wasn't on display on his face or in his voice.

"Sorry, but I can't tell you."

As she reached the door she turned, he voice oddly gentle. "Your partner lost a lot of blood, but he'll be fine."

As far as they could tell, they'd been held prisoners now for eight days, and with each passing day their hopes of being rescue became slimmer and slimmer. Their only chance now was that someone would slip up and make a mistake.

By now both Napoleon and Illya had had their bandages and stitches removed. Napoleon had been given a t-shirt and pants to wear, but Illya was still naked, giving Marsen easy access to his

body as she performed her daily tests. Illya hated the unwelcome hands handling his body, but the threat of Napoleon's death kept him in line.

Whatever had happened to Napoleon over a week ago when his body rejected the 'implant' seemed to have left him with no side effects. Unfortunately it was now his turn to watch as his lover became more and more ill each day. The blond had little or no energy, and seemed to spend more hours sleeping than he did awake. Illya was still being injected with the yellow liquid ever five hours, and every day trying to keep food down was a battle royal. Of course whenever he did throw up, they simply brought in more food for him to eat, stating that he needed to keep up his strength for what lay ahead. If he tried to refuse the food, a gun would be quickly pointed at Napoleon's head.

Watching his partner during another session of testings performed by Marsen, Napoleon took in the dark circles under his eyes, and his almost greyish complexion. *What the hell was that bitch doing to him?!* He'd asked that question several times over the last week, but each time he'd simply been ignored.

Once they were alone again, or as alone as they could be considering the cameras in the walls, Napoleon asked the same question he asked after each session, "Illya, how are you holding out?"

His answer was dripping with the usual sarcasm. "Just dandy, Napoleon." As his stomach turned once again, Illya's face momentarily took on a look of complete helplessness. "Napoleon, I don't know how much longer I can take this."

"Don't worry, tovarish, I'll get us out of here."

Pounding his fist into the side of the bed, Illya yelled, "You've been saying that for the past week, and so far you've done nothing to get us out of here!" Seeing the pain and guilt on his lover's face, Illya instantly regretted his words. Taking several deep breaths, he tried to calm himself down. "I'm sorry. I know you're doing everything you can. I just seem to be rather short tempered lately."

Trying to lighten the mood, "Really? Personally I hadn't noticed any difference at all in your behavior."

His partner gave a small chuckle. "Very funny."

Unexpectedly the door to their room opened and a woman with long dark hair, and a cap pulled down low over her head -- probably Katherine -- entered the room. It was unusual for their jailers to make any visits in between the five-hour intervals.

Solo's eyes widened as Katherine, no - NOT Katherine, walked towards his bed. April. April Dancer! Heeding April's silent warnings to remain quiet, he quickly closed his fingers over the note she slipped into his hand. Giving him a small smile, she then walked over to Illya. Seeing the astonished look on the Russian's face, she gave him a quick wink before leaving the room.

Trying to open the note without drawing attention to himself, Napoleon quietly read the five words scrawled on the page: Help is on the way.

He smiled widely at his partner. "Illya, I have a feeling that everything is going to be okay."

Walking down the hall, April quietly ducked into a small cleaning closet, and took out her communicator.

"Open Channel D."

"April, did you find them?"

"Yes, Mark, they're in a room in the east wing of the building. They're both chained up, and with cameras trained on them I wasn't able to get them loose."

"Do they require medical assistance?"

"They seem fine, although Illya was looking rather worn around the edges."

"Okay. Our backup just arrived, so we'll be ready to storm the building in five minutes. When you hear the explosions, go free Napoleon and Illva, and then get the hell out of there."

"Be careful, Mark."

"You too. Over and out."

April patiently waited in the closet until she heard the first of the explosions. Pulling her cap down even lower over her face, she made her way out into the hall, passing several women who paid her little attention, and headed back to the cell containing her two friends.

As she entered the room, she was stopped dead in her tracks. A woman, the real Katherine, was standing over Illya's bed, pointing a gun to his stomach. "Put the gun down," April commanded.

Looking up at the agent, Katherine smiled. "I don't know who you are, but I believe you're at a slight disadvantage here. You put YOUR gun down, or your friend here will have a new belly button."

"April, put the gun down," Napoleon directed. He had no intentions of jeopardizing his lover's safety.

Illya was irate. "Napoleon, don't be a fool!"

April looked from one agent to the other before making up her mind. Illya, who had the gun pointed at him, appeared calm and quite prepared to accept his fate. Napoleon on the other hand looked frantic. Instantly she knew that if Illya died, they wouldn't just be losing one good agent. They'd be losing two. Slowly she lowered her gun to the floor, and placed her hands on her head.

Taking in a deep breath, Katherine relaxed as she found herself once again in control. "That's much better. Move over to Solo's bed where I can keep an eye on you."

As April complied, Napoleon asked, "So what do we do now?"

"That all depends on your friends, Mr. Solo. If they fail in their attempt to siege the building you'll be allowed to live."

"And if they succeed?" He knew he wasn't going to like the answer.

In response to Napoleon's question, she cocked the gun she had aimed at Illya, and stared coldly into Napoleon's eyes.

With her free hand, Katherine unclipped the walkie-talkie from her belt, and brought it up to her mouth. "This is Katherine here, I have the subject secured. Repeat, I have the subject secured."

After a few moments, Marsen's disembodied voice came over the communicator. "Good. We have only a few minutes before we're completely overrun by UNCLE agents. I want you to terminate the experiment, and then make your way to the designated rendezvous point."

"Yes, Doctor."

Clipping the walkie-talkie back to her belt, Katherine slowly looked into wide, pure blue eyes. "I'm sorry, Illya." *Why the hell was this so hard?! It's not like I haven't killed before. You're weak,* she upbraided herself. *Why did you have to look into his eyes? This wasn't just some experiment, this is a human being. An innocent! It doesn't matter. You have your orders. Pull the damn trigger!*

Taking advantage of the enemy's hesitation, Illya made a grab for the gun, and at the same time April lunged for the woman. Grabbing her right arm, she spun her around and gave her a hard punch to the jaw, dropping her to the floor.

"Nice right," Illya complimented.

"Thanks. You weren't so bad yourself."

"Self-preservation," he grinned. "It's a wonderful motivator."

"I hate to break up this little mutual admiration society." Napoleon always hated being left out of the action. "But do you think you can cut us loose, April? Katherine there should have the keys."

April gave the groggy woman lying on the floor a small push with her foot. "You heard the man, unlock their chains."

Starting with Illya first, she unlocked his leg shackles, and then moved over to Napoleon. Tucking his blanket more securely around his waist, Illya lowered his legs over the side of the bed, but made no attempts to stand. The excitement of the past few minutes had done nothing for his already upset stomach.

As soon as Napoleon was free, Katherine found herself facing down one very angry enforcement agent. Pushing her up against the wall, Napoleon shoved his face into hers, "I want to know exactly what type of experiments Marsen has been running on my partner."

Fearing her boss more than any man, she whispered, "Doctor Marsen will kill me if I betray her."

"That won't be a problem," came a new voice from the doorway. "Marsen's dead."

April turned towards the familiar voice, "Mark, nice of you to join the party."

"Sorry I'm a little late, but Marsen set fire to all her research notes before she was killed. We weren't able to save much."

Napoleon turned his attentions back to Marsen's second in charge, "Looks like you don't have Marsen to worry about any more, so all you have to worry about now. . . is me." The look in his eyes promising her a rather painful death if his partner was in any way in danger.

No longer able to look into those dark eyes, she lowered her head and whispered, "You were both impregnated."

Illya looked up sharply, "Impregnated? Impregnated with what?"

Once again looking into those blue eyes, she sighed, "With a child." The room turned deathly

quiet. Looking at Napoleon she continued, "You miscarried, less than twenty-four hours after impregnation. III. . . Mr. Kuryakin on the other hand, well, his body seems to be accepting the embryo."

Five pairs of eyes suddenly became focused on Illya's stomach as if expecting some small beast to suddenly claw its way out of his abdomen. Completely stunned, Napoleon released his grip on Katherine's arms and stepped back. April and Mark were rooted to their places, April unsuccessfully trying to imagine Illya nine months pregnant, and Mark thanking God that he wasn't in Illya's shoes.

Even since before UNCLE, Illya had known fear, pain, torture, hunger and despair, always bearing it with silence and fortitude. Rarely letting his mask of indifference slip in front of anyone aside from Napoleon. It was a matter of pride. But with the mere notion that somehow he'd been impregnated, that cold mask of indifference quickly gave way to panic and disbelief

His hand automatically clenched the blanket even closer to his stomach. "No." *This isn't happening!* "Oh, no. It's not possible. I'm a man. I CAN'T have a baby! It's - it's physically impossible!"

"That's what Doctor Marsen was trying to change," Katherine explained. "She wanted a future where the women were dominant, and the men were. . ."

"Barefoot and pregnant?" Napoleon finished for her, finding his voice at last.

"Something like that."

"Why?" Illya demanded to know.

"She thought the world would be better off if it were run by women. She blamed a lot of world problems on men, from wars to unemployment."

"And you believed her?" Napoleon asked.

"I. . ." Katherine swallowed hard, fighting to keep control of her emotions. "I was more interested in her experiments with fertility. Doctor Marsen was decades ahead in her field of research. If Mr. Kuryakin is able to carry this baby to full term, thousands of women who are unable to conceive could undergo the same procedure."

"Women such as yourself?" Illya asked.

When she finally answered the question, her voice was barely a whisper. "Yes."

No longer interested in the 'why', Napoleon changed the subject to the 'how'. "Where did Marsen get the. . ." blushing slightly, Napoleon paused for a moment, trying to think of an appropriate description, ". . . material from?"

"Material?"

Illya rolled his eyes. He was in no mood to beat around the bush. "What Napoleon is unsuccessfully trying to ask is, where did Marsen get the eggs and sperm from?"

"The eggs were taken from several of the women under Marsen's command."

"And the sperm?" Illya asked without any hint of embarrassment.

When Katherine didn't respond straight away, Napoleon again stepped forward, and took hold of

her upper arm. "My partner asked you a question."

Looking at some seeming fascinating spot on the floor, Katherine murmured, "You were both harvested when you were first brought here."

All eyes suddenly become focused on Illya once again, as hysterical laughter emerged from deep within the blond's throat. Trying not to hyperventilate, Illya managed, "Are you telling me that I'm pregnant with Napoleon's child?"

"No," she answered slowly. "Your own."

Illya snapped. "This is too much!" His complexion suddenly turning green, he quickly lunged off the bed and raced to the bathroom, slamming the door behind him.

Exchanging worried glances with April and Mark, Napoleon moved to the door and placed his hand on the doorknob. Before he could open it however, sounds of violently ill retching became evident to everyone in the room.

Not wanting to invade his lover's space, Napoleon opened the door a crack, "Illya?"

"Idi k chortu!"

"What did he say?" Mark asked, as Napoleon gently closed the door.

Go to hell. "He ah. . . wants to be left alone for a while." Not an exact translation, but close enough. "Look, why don't you two take Katherine here, and make sure the compound is secure."

Wanting to help their friends, but knowing their presence to be unwanted, Mark cuffed the dark-haired woman, and led her out of the room, followed closely by his partner.

A thought suddenly occurring to Napoleon, he stopped them. "One last thing. . . "

"Don't worry," April reassured the senior agent, "we won't breath a word of this to anyone."

"Thanks." Watching the trio leave, Napoleon quietly sat down on one of the beds, and patiently waited for his upset lover to pull himself together.

"It's incredible," Doctor Scott Hurts (a rather unfortunate name for a doctor) exclaimed, and not for the first time that day.

If he says that one more time, Illya fumed, *I'm going to kill him!*

Successfully reading the look on his lover's face, Napoleon subtly moved the tray, containing scalpels and other assorted sharp instruments, out of reach of the younger man's beautiful, but deadly hands.

Having given both Illya and Napoleon thorough examinations, Doctor Hurts, Head of the U.N.C.L.E. Medical Division in the New York headquarters, was now sitting at his desk comparing Illya's test results with what little of Doctor Marsen's notes had been saved the previous day.

"Absolutely incredibly," the fifty-year-old man repeated.

"That's it," Illya muttered under his breath, getting up from his chair and taking a step towards the

unsuspecting doctor.

Before he could take another step however, Napoleon was at his side, placing a restraining arm on his shoulder.

"Scott, how about letting us in on what you've got there?" Napoleon asked

Scott looked up as if suddenly realizing that he wasn't alone in the room. "I'm sorry Napoleon. It's just that this is all so. . ."

"Don't say it," Illya warned.

"Sorry." Taking a close look at the Russian, Scott realized just how on-edge the agent was. "Both of you take a seat, and I'll fill you in on what we've been able to piece together."

"First off, Scott, what was the drug that they were injecting Illya with? It seemed to be fairly important, and it's been over fifteen hours since his last injection." Napoleon had been worrying about that yellow drug, or lack of it, for the last several hours.

"We've been running test on the samples that were brought back, and ninety percent of it seems to be comprised of hormones. The type a woman's body releases during pregnancy."

"And the other ten percent?" Illya asked.

"We haven't been able to pinpoint it yet, but going by what little information we've learned from Katherine Wallace, it seems to be some sort of growth accelerator."

"Growth accelerator?" *How much more complicated could things get?* "To accelerate what?" Napoleon asked.

"The growth of the fetus."

"And just how. . . pregnant am I?" *And why the hell couldn't this have happened to Napoleon and not me!*

"Ten weeks."

"Ten?! Over a period of eight days, I'm ten weeks pregnant?"

"Basically, yes. The hormones you're going to have to keep taking for the remainder of the pregnancy, but I'm fairly confident that we'll be able to increase the strength so that you'll only need to be injected once or twice a day. The staff in the lab are working on the hormones at the moment. Minus the accelerant, of course."

"Why?" Illya asked. "No offence to you or Mother Nature, but the faster I can have this over and done with, the better."

"Illya, we're dealing in unknowns here, and I don't want to add another wild card to the deck. Not enough of Marsen's research notes were recovered dealing with this accelerant, and Katherine wasn't of much help. I'd rather not use a drug that I'm unfamiliar with. I have no idea how it will affect you or the fetus as it develops."

Trying to sound like nothing more than a worried partner and friend, Napoleon asked, "Is Illya in any danger at all?" He glanced at his partner, taking in his tired and drawn features. "I mean, ever since this all started, he's been exhausted and nauseous." *Not to mention more irritable than normal.* Of course, Napoleon wasn't silly enough to mention that last part out loud.

The doctor smiled at Napoleon's concern. Illya merely rolled his eyes. He certainly wasn't about to let it show, but Napoleon's obvious concern for him gave him a warm comforting feeling inside. *How long has it been since anyone truly cared whether I lived or died?*

"Don't worry, Napoleon, morning sickness and fatigue are natural for the. . ." Scott looked to Illya, paused, then smiled, ". . .mother during the first trimester."

Napoleon still wasn't satisfied, "But it wasn't just morning sickness. Illya had trouble keeping any food down."

He's behaving just like an expectant father, Scott mused. "Some women. . . sorry, Illya, experience more nausea than others. But in this case, I wouldn't be at all surprised if the accelerant was compounding the problem." Hurts turned his attention to Illya. "Give it a couple of days, and then if you're still having problems with morning sickness, let me know and I'll give you some anti-nausea tablets. Most women find that for mild nausea, eating some plain crackers when they wake up in the morning helps to settle their stomach."

Scott leaned back in his chair, and surveyed the two young men before him. Illya had his cold Russian front firmly in place. It was a sure sign that he was concerned. Napoleon, on the other hand was clearly worried, probably thinking of every possible complication that could go wrong for his friend.

"The bottom line is, I can't give you both any absolutes. There have been rare occasions where the death of the mother has occurred during pregnancy or labor, but Illya, you're healthy and have no medical conditions that I'm worried about, aside from the fact that you're male, and the fetus is attached to your abdominal wall. But so long as we keep a close eye on both you and the embryo during the pregnancy, we should be able to head off any problems that may occur. We just have to ensure that the fetus is gaining an adequate blood supply through which it absorbs oxygen and nutrients, and that it's not adversely affecting any of your internal organs." Scott paused for a moment. As much as he abhorred the idea, it was his duty to point out all possible solutions to his patient. "Of course, Illya, if you have a problem with this entire situation, there is one other option."

"Abortion," Illya confirmed smoothly. It was obvious to Napoleon that this was something Illya had already thought about.

"Yes."

"What would that involve?"

"Illya?" Napoleon was stunned. So long as Illya was in no real danger, he couldn't believe that his partner, and lover was seriously contemplating terminating the pregnancy, terminating his own child.

"This is my body, and my decision," Illya reminded him coldly.

Taking off his reading glasses, Hurts turned his full attention to the blond Soviet. "If you were a woman, and being less than 12 weeks into the pregnancy, I'd use suction curettage; meaning that the fetus would be removed with a vacuum aspirator, followed by scraping the uterus, or in your case the abdominal wall." Wanting to make this option as ugly as possible, Scott continued, "If you decide to terminate the pregnancy AFTER the first 12 weeks, then I'd have to use D and E: dilation and evacuation; dismember the fetus and then remove it." As Scott had hoped, both agents before him turned a little pale at the idea.

"Dismember?" Illya asked uncomfortably.

"By now, that little baby inside of you has developed all of its organs. It has a head, mouth, arms and legs, all of which it can move."

The room became deathly quiet for several minutes as Napoleon and Scott waited for Illya to make a decision. Illya's face had gone completely blank, not allowing Napoleon to read what was going on in that sometimes-dispassionate scientific brain of his. It made him more than a little nervous.

He was mentally preparing himself to talk Illya out of having an abortion, when the younger man finally spoke, his voice sounding tired and resigned. "I've killed a lot of people over the years, both men and women," he began, "but I've never killed an innocent, and I'm not about to start now."

Both Napoleon and the doctor let out breath of relief.

Before either could get a word out however, a lab assistant from Section Five knocked on the door, and without waiting for conformation that he wasn't interrupting anything, entered the room. "Dr. Hurts, I have the hormone concoction that you ordered." As he handed over the bottle containing the hormones, plus a file report to the doctor, the man looked over to Napoleon and Illya. "So, I hear the two of you had to be rescued yet again," he grinned.

Napoleon grimaced. "Not all of us were born to sit on our butts behind a Bunsen burner, Petersen."

"Not everyone has the brains to work in a lab sitting on their butts behind a Bunsen burner," Petersen retorted. "Illya, if you ever get tired of getting your butt kicked out in the field, I have a nice comfy stool in the lab with your name on it."

"I just may take you up on that offer," he sighed. Considering his 'condition,' Illya was sure he'd be pulled from field work immediately.

Suddenly nervous, Illya waited until Petersen had left the room before asking, "Just how many people know about my situation?"

"Don't worry, Illya. Only myself and Mr. Waverly know the full circumstances."

"Don't forget April and Mark," Napoleon added.

This was obviously news to Scott.

"They were present when we found out that I'd been impregnated," Illya informed him. "How long before I. . . " *this is utterly ridiculous,* "start to. . ."

"Show?" Hurts finished for him.

"Yes," he answered, desperately trying not to blush.

"Well, since this is your first. . ."

"And only. . ."

"...child, I'd say about another two or three weeks. And of course you can only go so far with wearing baggy pants and jackets."

"And what do we do when baggy clothes no longer hide the pregnancy?" Napoleon asked. "We

can't just keep Illya locked up for five months."

"Well, I'm assuming that you'll want to keep this whole thing as private as possible," Hurts murmured as he scanned the report he'd been handed.

"Definitely," Illya confirmed. How many times had he heard top secret projects and assignments being talked about in elevators, hallways, and in the cafeteria? He had no intentions of becoming the poster boy for every tabloid rag in the country.

"Well, Illya, unless you plan to don a wig, a dress and a bra, you may have to keep hidden away until the baby's delivered."

The image of Illya dressed as a woman brought a huge beaming smile to Napoleon's lips, and a scowl to Illya's. "That's not funny," the blond responded dryly.

Placing the file on the table, Hurts got up from his desk, and walked over to a wall cabinet, pulling out antiseptic, cotton wool, and a needle. "Illya, roll up your sleeve." Illya complied as the doctor filled the needle with the hormonal drug then walked over to him. "Just until I'm sure that this hormone mixture the lab boys put together is sufficient, I want you to stay in the infirmary."

"Is that really necessary?" Illya asked with disdain. "I've just spent the last eight days chained to a bed."

"Afraid so," Scott confirmed as he swabbed Illya's forearm with the antiseptic, before slipping the needle into his vein. "But if it makes you feel any better, I'm not into bondage."

"I'm so relieved," Illya deadpanned.

"Going by the lab reports, you should only require two injections a day. Once I'm sure that you and the baby are responding well to the injections, I'll release you from the infirmary. You know how to use a needle, so you'll be able to give yourself the injections." Suddenly a wicked glint brightened the older man's eyes, and he added, "Unless of course you and Napoleon have decided to shack up together, in which case, Napoleon can administer the hormones."

"What?!"

"Excuse me?"

"Oh please, don't insult my intelligence." The doctor smiled. God, he'd been wanting to do this all day. "Firstly, from the first day the two of you were partnered together, the sexual tension between the two of you has been thick enough to cut with a carving knife. Secondly, if you'll remember, the physical examinations I gave you both last night were very thorough, and rather revealing. It's quite obvious that the two of you have recently become involved in certain sexual activities."

Knowing it was hopeless, Illya still tried to foreign innocence. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Do you want me to go into specifics?" Scott threatened.

"No," Napoleon quickly interrupted, "that's not necessary."

"Does Alexander know?"

"Yes. We thought it would be best if there weren't any secrets," Napoleon answered.

"I'm glad you did. It proves that the two of you are serious about your relationship. And may I say,

it's about time." Looking over to Illya, Scott tried not to laugh. The poor Soviet agent looked horrified.

"Illya, don't worry, you'll only make yourself sick," Hurts tried to pacify him. "I'm sure no one else picked up on your feelings for each other."

"How did you know?" Illya asked.

"You forget, I've seen the two of you look after one another when you've been hurt. It was obvious that the two of you cared a great deal about each other."

"Is that all?" Illya asked. If there was anything else that gave the two of them away, Illya wanted to know about it.

"Have I ever told you about my lover?"

"What's that got to do with. . ."

"We've been together for fifteen years now. His name is Bruce."

"Bruce?" Both agents were stunned. "You're gay?" Napoleon asked incredulously.

"As gay as Rock Hudson," he confirmed.

"Rock Hudson's gay?" Illya's eyes were as large as saucers.

"Oh please," Scott sighed. "Napoleon, go take your partner down to the cafeteria and get him something to eat. In the meantime, I'll have a private room in the infirmary all set up." Hurts then stood up from his desk, picking up several file folders. "Now if you'll excuse me, I've got a lot of explaining to do to Alexander."

Illya's cheeks blushed a bright red, *Thank God, I won't be there for THAT!*

Napoleon sat across from his partner, watching as he wolfed down yet another ham sandwich, his nausea of the past eight days gone for the moment.

When Napoleon's wife died after less than a year's marriage, Napoleon was certain that he'd never know that type of unconditional love ever again. Of course, he hadn't counted on being partnered with an irresistibly stubborn, prickly, sarcastic, shy, passionate, loyal to a fault, gorgeous Russian spy. When he realized that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with his blue-eyed dream lover, he'd firmly placed any thoughts of children carrying on the Solo name from his mind. After all, what did babies do anyway? Eat, sleep, cry, and make dirty diapers. Napoleon Solo. . . super spy, sophisticated man of the world. Diaper changer? *I've rather be chained up in a Thrush prison cell.*

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"Ah. . . Illya?"
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"What?"

"Have you ever changed a diaper?"

"What's a diaper?"

Oh shit!

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Chapter 2 by Shannon

Two days later both Illya and the baby were responding well to the hormone shots, and the blond was released from the infirmary. Due to Doctor Hurts' recommendations, Waverly had suspended the Soviet agent from field work, temporarily reassigning him to the U.N.C.L.E. labs.

Rather than being reassigned a new partner, Napoleon was also taken off field assignment, and instead was given the unenviable task of evaluating six new U.N.C.L.E. rookies recently graduated from the UNCLE survival school.

Of course it had all raised several eyebrows, and rumors as to why the famous Solo/Kuryakin team had not only been pulled from the field, but also split up. Fortunately, the real truth behind the entire situation was so unbelievable that there was no danger of anyone guessing the truth. . . for the moment anyway.

What was to happen once Illya's pregnancy started to show was still unknown. Napoleon had suggested that he and his pregnant lover use one of the isolated UNCLE safe houses during the last half of the pregnancy, but the idea had been quickly vetoed by Scott. The Doctor was adamant that Illya stay close at hand in case any medical complications arose. If Illya were to go into premature labor without any medical assistance available to perform an immediate c-section, the consequences could be life threatening to both Illya and the baby. While both agents risked their lives on a daily bases, they didn't do it needlessly, or flippantly (although at times it appeared so), and without good reason. And there was just no reason good enough to risk Illya's life by distancing himself from medical help should it be needed.

And so Napoleon Solo found himself in one of the U.N.C.L.E. shooting galleries, chanting to himself, *Illya. I'm doing this for Illya,* as he watched one of the rookie agents almost shoot himself in the foot.

I hate rookies.

Napoleon had thought that while Illya was temporarily working in the UNCLE labs, that he would continue to remain in the field, but a quiet word from Scott Hurts had changed all that. He'd told Napoleon the importance of Illya avoiding stress as much as possible, and Napoleon knew the only thing more stressful than going into the field with your partner by your side, was being sidelined while your partner went out on his own. Even if he were assigned a temporary partner, he knew Illya would still worry about him.

Second Trimester

Napoleon eagerly stepped out of the elevator and headed towards his shared apartment with a mixture of excitement and lust. He'd spent the last two weeks at the Paris U.N.C.L.E. headquarters accompanying Mr. Waverly on several Section One meetings. It had been the longest amount of time that he and Illya had spent apart since becoming lovers, and he was desperate to hold his gorgeous Russian in his arms once again.

During the last few phone calls he'd shared with him, Illya's mood seemed to have improved dramatically. He was no longer having problems with morning sickness, and there was a lightness and sexuality in his voice that Napoleon hadn't heard in weeks.

And so Napoleon had spent the last several hours mentally thinking on just how he planned to attack his Illya. *My Illya.* God, how he loved that little two-lettered word.

Emotionally he wanted the night to be a long, slow session of loving, but the little beast throbbing between his legs had other ideas entirely. He groaned in anticipating as his less than steady hand punched in the security code that would allow him access to heaven.

Closing the door behind him and resetting the alarm, Napoleon felt a twinge of disappointment when there was no Russian whirlwind running into his arms to greet him. *Blockhead, you should have told Illya you were catching an earlier flight.*

Hearing the sound of water running, he suddenly knew where his lover was. Dropping his suitcase by the couch, he walked into the bedroom, taking off his jacket and tie, and opened the bathroom door. Enveloped in a cloud of steam, he made his way to the shower, and before he knew what was happening, the shower door quickly slid open, and strong arms were hauling him into the shower, clothes and all.

"What took you so long?" Illya murmured before devouring the larger man's lips with his own, his searching tongue making a home for itself within Napoleon's hot mouth.

His need no less urgent, Napoleon's hands ran up and down the blond's back, before coming to rest on the Russian's slim hips, pulling him closer, desperate to feel his lover's straining desire.

After several earth shaking minutes, overcome with a wave of dizziness, and weak kneed, Napoleon reluctantly broke the kiss. Gulping in air, he smiled. "I take it you're happy to see me?"

"Mmm. . ." Illya's strong hands were quickly ridding Napoleon of his wet shirt. "More than happy," he murmured, throwing the dripping wet shirt over the sliding shower door, not caring where or what it landed on. "One might even say ecstatic."

"Oh God," Napoleon groaned as Illya's demanding hands impatiently removed his belt, and ruthlessly unzipped his pants. "Illya, have a little mercy," he panted.

"Mercy is for the weak, Napoleon." Kissing his way down his lover's body, Illya wrestled off Napoleon's slacks and underwear, along with his shoes and socks. Helpless to the erotic sensations assaulting his body, Napoleon weakly lifted his legs, allowing Illya to completely remove the last of his clothing and fling them over the shower door with the same carelessness he had shown Napoleon's shirt.

Napoleon vaguely heard the sound of glass breaking, but was too caught up to worry if his expensive bottle of cologne was still in one piece, as wave after wave of physical pleasure threatened to shake him apart.

Illya's lush mouth hungrily kissed the insides of his thighs while his hands massaged his ass. Leaning his upper body against the shower wall for support, Napoleon entangled his hands in his lover's hair, guiding Illya's talented lips to where they were most needed.

Complying to the older man's desires, a low satisfying groan escaped Napoleon's mouth and his head arched back as those wonderfully skilled, kiss-swollen lips descended upon his cock, threatening to suck his very life essence from his body.

Napoleon had had many varied and assorted sexual partners in the past, but none had performed this particular act with such hunger and desire. With Illya making love to him in one of the most intimate of ways, he knew what it felt like to be cherished and loved completely and without reserve.

Napoleon's hips bucked forward enthusiastically, burying his cock deeper within his lover's deliciously moist mouth, as a hand caressed the crack of his ass and a soap-slicked finger made

contact with the puckered entrance to his body.

"Yes!" he breathed as the long slender finger slid into his body, finding his prostate with ease. With the dual assault, Napoleon knew that it was only a matter of seconds before his body was overwhelmed and would seek release.

As if reading his thoughts, Illya withdrew his mouth and gave a tight squeeze to the base of his lover's cock, keeping his body from the impending orgasm. Slowly Illya kissed his way up Napoleon's body, stopping every now and then to teasingly suck and bite the tender flesh along the way. By the time Illya's lips had once again found Napoleon's, the Russian's single finger that had been buried deep within his lover had turned into three fingers, carefully stretching and preparing the muscles.

Feeling nothing but pleasure, Napoleon eagerly turned his back to the younger man, causing the fingers to slid from his body. Bracing his arms on the shower wall, and moving his legs wider apart, he impatiently waited for the possession his lover was about to claim.

"Please," he begged.

Soft laughter filled his ears, as Illya gently nibbled the back of his neck. "Polya, I thought you liked our encounters long and drawn out."

"Not when we've been apart for two weeks," he gasped out. "Illya, you're killin' me."

"Mmm, we can't have that now, can we? Not when you have so many obvious. . . talents." Desire and passion were clearly evident in the Russian's husky voice.

Grabbing a bar of soap, Illya lathered up his hands and carefully applied the soapsuds to his engorged cock before placing it to the entrance of his lover's body.

Not willing to wait any longer for completion, Napoleon desperately pushed back, feeling only a little pain as he sheathed Illya's rod-like flesh to the hilt.

Crying out, Illya pulled his lover's upper body closer to his as Napoleon took the control from the Russian, and began a long hard series of thrusts against the cock that was sweetly piercing his body.

The low moans of pleasure that escaped the younger man's mouth were like an aphrodisiac, and spurred Napoleon to move harder and faster. Illya slightly adjusted the angle so that with each thrust his cock hit the sensitive prostate of his lover, causing Napoleon's body to quickly shatter into orgasm, and his thrusts to become wilder and out of control.

Still shaking in orgasm, Napoleon reached behind to clutch his lover's ass, pushed him as deeply into his body as possible. Unable to resist the euphoric sensations any longer, Illya cried out as he spilled deep inside the tight passage of his lover.

Long minutes passed, as the two men slowly regained their senses, basking in the afterglow of sex.

With the warm relaxing water from the shower falling on his back, Illya remained draped over the older man, softly kissing along the tanned back and shoulders, his member still buried in Napoleon's body. "I wish we could stay like this forever," he murmured softly.

Napoleon smile, savoring the moment. It wasn't often that his lover expressed such sentiments, and it only ever happened during their lovemaking.

"I do, too," Napoleon agreed. "We'd have plenty of water, but I don't think we'd have enough room to have a fridge and stove installed."

"Blockhead," Illya scolded as he fondly nuzzled Napoleon's neck, while his right hand reached back to turn the shower off. "But since you brought the subject up. . ."

"Illya Nickovitch Kuryakin, only you could think of food at a time like this."

"Don't forget that I'm now eating for two," the Russian objected.

That statement startled Napoleon for the briefest of moments. Leaning forward so that the deflated cock slipped easily from his body, Napoleon turned around and rested his hands on the slightly swollen mid-section of his partner. "You know something?" he spoke softly, "I almost HAD forgotten about Junior."

"Junior?"

"Well, we can't keep calling it 'it'." Pulling his partner into a loose embrace, his left hand remained on the golden belly. "You're actually beginning to show," he murmured in wonderment.

"Yes, I know. I've even had to loosen my belt by two notches." The Russian's voice was slightly tainted with irritation.

"I always told you you needed to put on a little weight. I'm just surprised at the lengths you'll go to, to gain it," Napoleon teased.

"Very funny. We'll see if you can still make jokes when I start to resemble a butter ball."

Napoleon tenderly kissed the smaller man's nose. "At least I can be assured that if I upset you, you won't be in any condition to extract physical retribution."

"I may not be able to chase you down, Napoleon, but remember I'll still have my gun."

"So I see," Napoleon murmured as his hand traveled down the lithe body before him to gently tease the softening flesh, smiling as he felt it slowly begin to harden.

"Napoleon?"

"Yes."

"Food."

Napoleon laughed. "Sometimes I wonder what exactly takes priority in your life, Illyusha. Me, or food?"

"Sometimes I wonder the same thing," Illya teased.

"Cute."

Moving out of the shower, the two lovers slowly toweled each other off, oblivious to the mess around them that had been made with Napoleon's wet clothes and shoes.

Illya wrapped a large towel around his waist, while Napoleon slipped on a robe.

"Why don't you go turn down the covers and make yourself comfortable, while I go into the kitchen and get us something to eat."

"I have a better idea, Polya, why don't YOU go turn down the bed covers and get comfortable, while I get us something to eat."

"No offence, Illya, but I've see what you've been eating lately."

"And what exactly would that be?" the blond challenged.

"Don't tell me you're still trying to deny it? I saw you eating a pickle sandwich WITH mustard and catsup, and when you were finished, you DRANK the pickle juice from the jar."

"I did no such thing."

"Illya, I saw you."

"And what's wrong with mustard and catsup?"

"Nothing. . . for me. But the last time I got you a sandwich with mustard and catsup, you not only refused to eat it, you also bitched about it for over two hours. As for drinking the pickle juice. . ."

"I did not drink pickle juice," Illya stubbornly disagreed.

"All right, you didn't drink the pickle juice. I simply saw you raise the pickle jar to your mouth, and then the juice just magically evaporated before it reached your lips."

Illya was no longer able to hide the smile his partner invoked. "All right," he chuckled, "I promise, no more pickle juice."

A few minutes later Illya entered the bedroom, bringing with him a tray of food laden with several different types of desserts and toppings.

"What did you do?" Napoleon asked as he straightened up in bed. "Raid the dessert section at the local supermarket?"

"I'm in the mood for something sweet," Illya replied as he pulled down the blanket that had been covering Napoleon's bare waist, and then settled down on the bed with the tray on his lap.

Taking note of what lay on the tray, Napoleon asked, "Aren't you forgetting something?"

"Such as?"

"You didn't bring any bowls or utensils."

"Really?" The wicked glint in his eyes was at odds with the innocence in his voice. "How annoying. I guess we'll just have to improvise."

An adrenaline rush quickly flowed through Napoleon's body as a handful of chocolate mousse was slavered on his chest, followed by whipped cream, crushed nuts, and several cherries.

Ohhhhhh boy!

Three hours and two orgasms later, Napoleon, completely sated, and somewhat sticky and smelling of chocolate, gently pillowed his head on his lover's golden, almost hairless chest, and wrapped his arms around Illya's waist. Many a night Napoleon had fallen asleep in this particular

embrace, letting the sound of his partner's steady heartbeat to gently lull him to sleep. Despite all the trauma and pain his Russian lover had endured during his young life, he possessed a deep core of calmness that the American found comforting and reassuring in his otherwise topsy-turvy, upside-down world.

Feeling Illya's slender fingers softly stroking his hair, Napoleon let out a deep-contented sigh, and nuzzled his face into the golden chest, loving the feel of the fine chest hairs against his cheek.

"Comfortable?" Illya asked, somewhat amused.

"Very," he purred.

"Well, I'm afraid I'm going to have to disappoint you."

Groaning, the older man reluctantly lifted his head to read the bedside clock. Forcing his arms and legs to respond, Napoleon pulled away from the warm body he cherished and slowly got out of bed and walked to the bathroom.

Switching on the bathroom light, Napoleon surveyed the room. *What a mess.*

Quickly gathering up his water-soaked clothes, he half-heartedly wrung them out and hung them over the shower door. One of his shoes had landed on the bathroom sink, and had indeed knocked his favorite bottle of cologne onto the floor, where it now lay in dozens of pieces and shards of glass. He wasn't able to find his other shoe, *It couldn't have just walked off on its own,* but he did find one of his socks draped over the lighting fixture.

Stepping over the broken glass, Napoleon opened the medicine cabinet and removed the items necessary to give his partner his nightly injection of hormones.

By the time he'd walked back out into the bedroom, the needle all ready to be administered in one hand and a cotton ball soaked in alcohol in the other, Illya had curled up on this side and was soundly asleep. With his silky blond hair mussed up, his thick long eyelashes, and his face relaxed in slumber, he looked liked the cutest little boy Napoleon had ever seen. *I wonder if Junior will share his father's looks,* he pondered. *Another bright flame in this cold world. . . I hope so.*

Gently stroking back the golden bangs, Napoleon carefully sat down beside his partner. "Illya?"

"Mmm?" he responded drowsily.

"Just relax, sweetheart," Napoleon whispered as he gathered Illya's left arm and swabbed the intended area with the cotton ball.

"If I were any more relaxed," Illya murmured, turning his face into the pillow, "I'd be dead."

Napoleon smiled as he administered the hormones. *Just don't ever get that relaxed on me, partner.*

Placing the used needle on the bedside table, Napoleon switched off the bedside lamp, tiredly climbed in behind his exhausted partner and gently drew him into his arms. His right arm slid under Illya's shoulder, while his left hand settled comfortably around the blond's waist, caressing the small bulge. It was a strange feeling, knowing that in his hands lay not one life, but two.

Later that night, Napoleon awoke as the warm body in his arms gently tried to escape his embrace.

"Illya?"

"Sorry, Polya, but I have to use the bathroom," he whispered.

Rolling over onto his back, Napoleon watched as Illya sleepily got out of bed. "Put your slippers on."

"Why?"

"There's some broken glass near the sink."

"Broken glass? Your cologne?" the Russian guessed.

"Afraid so."

"I'm sorry, Polya."

"No you're not," he gently rebuked. "You hated that cologne."

"I didn't hate it," Illya corrected. "I simply thought that a little moderation was called for. I wouldn't be surprised if Thrush could smell you coming a mile away."

"Don't be insulting." Napoleon screwed up his nose. "I never wear cologne when I'm out in the field."

His bladder demanding attention, Illya quickly slipped into his slippers and walked into the bathroom, leaving the light off as he entered.

"Let me know if you find my right shoe," Napoleon sleepily called out.

His right shoes? Why would his right shoe. . . .ahhh yes. A warm smile lit the blond's face as memories of their lovemaking filled his thoughts.

As he stood over the toilet, emptying his bladder, he had the vague feeling that something didn't sound quite right. Walking over to the light switch, blinking furiously as his eyes adjusted to the light, he walked back over to the toilet and looked down.

"Ah, Napoleon," he called out, "I found your right shoe."

Racing down the corridor, oblivious to the stares he was gathering, Napoleon worriedly sought out the private room in the infirmary section of the U.N.C.L.E. headquarters where he knew his partner to be undergoing his weekly examination. Only minutes ago Dr. Scott Hurts had contacted Napoleon on his communicator and requested his presence.

Something was wrong, Napoleon fretted. He'd wanted to be present during the examination, but Illya had been adamantly opposed, reminding Napoleon that he was no emotional woman in need of support during a simple exam. Was that why Scott has asked him to join them? Maybe the exam had turned up something horribly wrong. *Dear God, please let him be okay.*

Quickly locating the examination room, Napoleon slammed open the door, and hurried over to where Illya lay on a hospital bed; his turtleneck sweeter pulled up high over his chest, and his black jeans pulled down low over his hips. Too worried to appreciate the view, Napoleon strode over to Illya's side and grasped his hand.

Illya's face was a mixture of puzzlement and worry as his gaze locked onto Napoleon's troubled brown eyes. "Napoleon, what's wrong?"

"Isn't that my line?" he asked, a little out of breath.

"Stop talking in riddles, and tell me what's wrong?"

"Hello, Napoleon."

Napoleon quickly spun around to the familiar voice coming from behind. "Scott, what's this all about? Is something wrong?"

"No, everything's perfectly fine. Why do you ask?" Hurts quietly closed the door behind him, and walked over to stand on the other side of the bed. Scott seemed as equally puzzled about Napoleon's behavior as Illya did.

"You requested my presence immediately. I thought perhaps. . ."

Illya suddenly looked very uncomfortable. "I'm sorry, I told Scott not to bother you."

"Then something is wrong?" Napoleon demanded.

"No, nothing's wrong," Scott reassured him. "I simply thought you might like to hear the baby's heartbeat."

"The baby's heartbeat?" the dark haired man echoed in surprise, relief making him weak-kneed.

"I tried to tell him that you wouldn't be interested," Illya said softly.

Looking at his lover, Napoleon took in his flaming red cheeks, and downcast eyes. "Hey, why wouldn't I be interested?" he asked, lightly brushing his hand along one scarlet cheek.

"Napoleon, let's not pretend this is more than it is." Ice now masked the Russian's feelings, his cheeks slowly losing their color. "I am not your wife, and I am not carrying your child. You needn't pretend to feign interest in any of this."

Napoleon was dumbfounded. "Illya, that child you're carrying is a part of you. How could I possibly not be interested?"

Opening his mouth to speak, Illya suddenly looked over to Scott and promptly clamped his mouth shut, obviously unwilling to discuss the subject any further in front of an audience.

"I can take a hint," Scott smiled softly. "We'll just finish this up, and then I'll give you two some privacy." Hurts then took out a stethoscope -- a rather peculiar looking stethoscope with two sets of earpieces -- from his pocket. Warming the cold metal in his hand for a few seconds, Scott placed one set of the earpieces in his ears, and then placed the flat metal disk on Illya's stomach, moving it around until he found what he was looking for. Apparently satisfied with what he was hearing, the doctor picked up the second set of earpieces and handed them to the American.

"Go head," Scott encouraged as Napoleon slowly leaned over his partner's stomach, gazing into troubled blue eyes as he slipped the earpieces in place.

After a few seconds, a look of astonishment consumed Napoleon's face. "My God," he whispered, "it's so fast." Suddenly worried, he asked, "Is that normal?"

"Perfectly normal," Scott reassured him.

Soft laughter escaped the agent's lips, as his left hand reached out to gently stroke the white gold hair from his lover's face. "My God," he repeated reverently. "Illya, you've got to hear this."

"I already have, Napoleon, several times." The Russian's voice was equally hushed.

Hurt filled the warm brown eyes for a brief moment. "You never told me," he accused.

"That sounds like my cue," Scott interrupted softly, removing the stethoscope from Illya's abdomen as Napoleon handed back the earpieces. Feeling a little guilty, Hurts left the room, walking down the corridor towards his office. He'd been aware of Illya's reluctance to share his pregnancy with his lover, and was now wondering if he should have left well enough alone.

Back in the private hospital-like room, Illya began the process of straightening up his clothes, while Napoleon silently watched, collecting his thoughts. After what seemed like an eternity of silence, he finally spoke. "Illya, do you want to tell me what's going on here?"

"What do you mean?" Illya asked as he moved from his lying position to a sitting position.

"Don't," the American warned, rubbing his forehead tiredly. "Illya, ever since this whole thing started you've been pushing me away. You won't let me be with you during the exams, and this morning during breakfast when I suggested that we do some baby shopping, you practically ran from the room."

A coldness settled over the blond's face, as he fought to control his emotions. "All right then, Napoleon." His voice was cold and calculating. "Let me ask you something. What exactly are you expecting to happen once the baby is born?"

"What?" The question had taken the older man off guard.

"You must have had some thoughts on the subject," the blond prodded. "Did you expect me to quit my job, and stay home to become some sort of housewife, looking after the baby and having a hot meal on the table ready and waiting for you every night when you come home from work?"

"No," the startled agent denied.

"Ah, then you planned to quit UNCLE to stay home and look after the baby yourself?"

"No!" The idea was ludicrous to the older man.

"Then what did you think would happen?" the Russian asked again.

"I ah, I guess I. . . I didn't really. . . think that far ahead," he finally admitted.

"And now that I'm making you think that far ahead?"

Suddenly feeling defeated, Napoleon slumped into a chair near the bed. Knowing it was no solution, he still offered, "We could hire a live-in nanny."

"And you have no problems with this child being raised by a nanny?"

Now on the defensive, Napoleon restlessly stood back up. "Well, you seem to have given this a great deal of thought. Why don't you tell me what you have planned?"

"Do you remember Darren Leam?" Illya asked calmly, ignoring Napoleon's raised voice.

"What has a retired UNCLE agent got to do with any of this?"

"He and his wife tried for several years to have children," Illya explained. "And because there were both in their early forties, they were rejected as possible candidates for adoption." Carefully watching Napoleon's reaction, the blond added, "I had lunch with Darren and his wife a few days ago."

"You're giving the baby away?" Napoleon was both shocked and hurt. Shocked at hearing his lover so casually discussing giving up his own child, his own flesh and blood. Hurt because he'd had to practically force Illya into a corner to discover his lover's obviously well thought out plan. *Damn it! He's already talked to Darren and his wife, and he's only telling me about this now?*

"Yes," the Soviet answered simply, as if reading his mind.

"Illya, how the hell could you even consider adoption without discussing it with me first?"

"Napoleon, you are neither the mother nor the father of this child," the blond reminded him firmly. "This has very little to do with you."

Anger coursed through Napoleon's body. "I'm your lover, for God's sake! The man you vowed to spend the rest of your life with." His voice shaky and his blood pressure rising, Napoleon grasped his lover's shoulders roughly, "Don't you dare tell me that I have no say in this!"

Hating the feeling of being trapped, Illya wrenched himself out of the larger man's grasp and, pushing the dark haired man back, got up off the bed and walked over to the far side of the room.

Napoleon began to follow his lover, but stopped when he saw the familiar look in the blond's features. A look he'd seen a thousand times out in the field, when they had their backs to the wall and a room full of Thrush agents to fight off. Suddenly Hurts' warnings drifted into the American's thoughts, "I don't want him becoming overly upset, Napoleon. . . We're in unknown territory here. . . I don't want to risk any possibilities of Illya going into premature labor."

Taking several deep breaths, Napoleon regathered his thoughts, and willed his anger to a manageable level.

Realizing that his space wasn't going to be violated, Illya slowly relaxed his tensed muscles, and released his clenched fists. He cautiously watched the other man, waiting for him to make the next move.

Knowing he'd get no apology, Napoleon pushed aside the pain he felt at being left out of such an important decision and refocused his thoughts on trying to dissuade Illya from his course of action. "I know it's not going to be easy," he began quietly, "and I don't have any alternative solutions to present to you at the moment, but Illya, this is probably our only chance at ever being able to become fathers. How can you just let it slip through your fingers like this?"

"Our only chance?" the Russian repeated sharply. "Have you given no thought to this child at all?" His tone clearly questioned Napoleon's motives.

"Illya, I've done nothing BUT think about this child for days now, and the more I think about it, the more I like the idea of being a father." A small smile briefly adorned his face. "I want to teach a child to play baseball and wipe away milk moustaches and read bedtime stories."

"Napoleon, you haven't been thinking about this child," the blond snapped. "All you've been thinking of are your own selfish desires!"

Trying to sooth his lover, and himself, Napoleon slowly walked over to the small blond and gently cupped his lover's anger-colored cheeks in his hands. "How can wanting to love your child," he whispered, "to raise your child with you, be at all selfish?"

Not yet ready to allow the other man close, Illya broke the contact. "We're UNCLE agents. We get shot at on a regular basis. And when was the last time we spent more than a couple of weeks in this country, let alone in New York? Napoleon, I wasn't even able to look after a cat. I had Natasha for less than a week before I had to give her away." Natasha had been a small kitten given to Illya by an elderly woman in his old apartment building. Illya had treated the woman, Sarah, with respect and kindness, and the woman in turn thought of the young Russian as a son. Even now, having moved in with Napoleon, Illya still visited Sarah as often as he could.

"This isn't some animal we're talking about here. We're talking about YOUR child. I'm sure we'll be able to come to some sort of an arrangement," Napoleon persisted.

"You're just like my father," the blond accused, "thinking only of yourself!" The second the words left his mouth, Illya instantly regretted them. This particular topic would only unleash a lot of painful memories that the slim blond had no wish to dredge up.

Father? What the hell is going on here? "Illya, you told me you didn't remember your father."

His eyes downcast, Illya desperately tried to think of any way possible to avoid discussions of a childhood he wanted to forget.

Sensing his lover was about to turn tail and run, Napoleon gently lifted the blond's chin so that he was able to see the pale face. "Illya, you're going to have to help me out here." He spoke softly, not wanting to threaten his already flighty partner. "I need to understand what's going on in that reclusive mind of yours. Help me to understand why," he begged. "Why are you so adamant about giving up this baby? And what does your father, a man who died when you were six years old, have to do with all this?"

Looking into his lover's concerned face, Illya could see not only the worry the older man had for him, but also the pain he had unwittingly caused to the most important person in his life. His lover. *Napoleon deserves better than this.*

"Napoleon. . . " Suddenly lost for words, Illya once more broke the contact and walked over to sit on the edge of the bed.

"Tell me about your father," Napoleon quietly persisted.

"I don't remember him." He strove to keep his voice flat and unemotional.

"Illya, you just compared me to your father," he pushed, unwilling to let the subject drop without a fight. "You obviously knew him in some capacity."

"He. . ." His throat feeling suddenly dry, the blond swallowed and tried again. "Some years ago, when I worked for the KGB, I came into possession of my father's journal." The KGB - yet more memories that he had no wish to dredge up. If only he could banish the memories he carried with him before his entry into UNCLE, before his life with Napoleon. *No,* he thought bitterly, *it's those memories that make me who I am.* Clearing his thoughts, he continued, "It was given to me by a man who fought alongside my father during the war."

Now we're getting somewhere. "What was in the journal?" *Come on Illya, don't close up on me now,* he silently pleaded when his lover didn't answer straight away.

"His love for my mother," he finally answered in hushed tones.

"And for you," Napoleon added.

"Yes, he loved me, Napoleon," he bitterly agreed, letting out a sad stifled laugh. "But he didn't love me enough to let me go."

"What do you mean?"

Taking a deep breath, the Russian finally got to the heart of the matter. "My father had an opportunity to get me out of Russian shortly before Kiev was invaded. Being in the army, he was unwilling to desert, and unable to take leave, but he knew of some people who were planning on leaving the country. He talked about it in his journal."

"And he didn't take the opportunity?" Napoleon asked, although he already knew the answer. Having seen Illya's personal files shortly after they became partners, the C.E.A. knew that his partner had spent time in a German labor camp, followed by an over-crowded Russian orphanage after the war.

"No. He didn't want to risk not being able to find me after the war."

"That's perfectly understandable Illya," he soothed.

Obviously Illya didn't feel the same way. "If he truly loved me, he wouldn't have hesitated to have me removed from possible danger." The old anger the smaller man had been carrying deep within himself for years started to burn brighter now. "Because my father could only think of himself, of his own feelings, and not mine, I had to watch my grandmother starve to death in a labor camp."

"Your father couldn't possibly have known. . ."

"Do not defend him to me, Napoleon!" he snapped. "He couldn't have known for sure that I would have become lost to him if I were to have been taken out of Russia either," he argued. "And he certainly didn't give any thought to the possibly that he wouldn't survive fighting in a war zone. All he thought about is how HE would feel if he lost HIS son, his only link to HIS wife. That's all he saw me as, Napoleon. When he wrote about me, all he would talk about was how much I looked like my mother. He never saw me as an individual, only an extension of his dead wife!"

Hesitating, Napoleon carefully thought through his response before putting it into words. "I'm sorry for what you had to go through during your childhood. No one should have to live through that kind of hell, but no one has a crystal ball. We can't see into the future to find out how our decisions are going to affect us, or those we love. Your father made a mistake. He was human, and he let his emotions, his love for you, interfere with his judgement. Just like you're letting your anger with your father affect your decision for this baby."

"Giving this baby a home with a mother and a father, two people who can be there twenty-four hours a day. . ."

"No one can be there twenty-four hours a day," Napoleon corrected.

"Perhaps not," the younger man reluctantly agreed, his anger slowly dissipating, "but what good are we to a child if we're on the other side of the world dodging bullets? What would happen to this child if we were killed in front of some Thrush firing squad?"

"I have family..."

"And what do you plan on telling them? That your lover - your MALE lover - just happened to

have become pregnant with his own child? Or do you plan on lying to them?"

Why the hell does he have to be so frustrating! Slowly counting to ten, Napoleon tried to equal his lover's now leveled voice. "You've obviously been thinking about this for some time now. Please give me some time to come up with some answers."

"There are no other solutions."

"Damn it, Illya! What makes you so sure?"

His answer was simple, "Because I've been this child, Polya." Illya reached out and gently caressed his lover's cheek. His earlier anger now gone, Illya wanted to convince his partner not through anger, which never worked with Napoleon, but through love, and lost dreams. "I know what it's like to wish for a normal life. To fantasize about the love of a father and a mother. Do we have the right to rob this child of that dream?"

Napoleon suddenly felt the floor drop out from under him. How could he argue with that? "No, I guess not," he agreed sadly.

Illya leaned forward and briefly brushed his lips against his lover's. "Thank you."

Without thought, Napoleon pulled the younger man into a rough embrace, hanging on for dear life. At the sound of the door opening Illya quickly pulled himself out of the tight grip.

Scott hesitated briefly in the doorway when he saw the two men. "I'm sorry, guys, I would have thought you'd be gone by now."

"We had a few things to discuss," Illya explained.

"Everything okay?"

Looking into his partner's dulled eyes, and slumped shoulders, Illya answered, "It will be."

Putting on his best smile, Napoleon grasped his lover's hand and pulled him from the bed. "Come on partner, I've got a desk full of paper work to get through, and I'm sure you've probably got a dozen and one experiments running in the lab."

"Only two." At his lover's raised eyebrows, he explained, "It's been a quiet week."

"Illya, before you go, you'd better put on your jacket," Hurts warned as he unhooked Illya's large black jacket from the back of the door. As the blond Russian reached out for his coat, Napoleon stepped forward and took the jacket himself from the doctor's hand. Holding out the jacket suggestively, the older man waited for Illya to slip his arms into the sleeves. While he knew that his partner would complain, it was little things like this that Napoleon missed, now that he was no longer dating women.

"I'm quite capable of dressing myself."

"Humor me."

With a small shake of his head and an exaggerated roll of his eyes, Illya grudgingly allowed his lover to help him on with his coat. As the American came around to do up the buttons, Illya slapped his hands away. "That will be quite enough, Napoleon," he scolded as he began doing up the buttons himself.

"You're not going to be able to hide behind that coat for much longer," Napoleon observed as he

watched the small bulge of Illya's stomach become hidden once again in the over-large coat. "I don't suppose you've come up with any plans on how you're going to hide your pregnancy for the next five months?"

"As a matter of fact," Scott interrupted, "Illya and I were just discussing that problem earlier today."

"And did you come up with any answers?"

Looking over to the Russian agent for permission, Scott began to discussion the arrangements that were to be made within the next week. "I was talking to Alexander a few hours ago, and he told me of a newly acquired safe house that has a fully equipped surgical room attached to it."

"What good is a surgical room without medical staff?" Napoleon asked.

"As it so happens, over the past twenty years I've worked for UNCLE, I seemed to have accumulated almost a year's worth of untaken vacation time."

"You'd put your life on hold for five months?"

"Willingly. I could use an extended break from work, and Bruce will be able to join me at the safe house within a few months. He was a medic during the war, so he's got more than enough experience to help me perform a c-section."

The idea of a non-UNCLE agent becoming involved didn't sit well with Napoleon. "No offence, Scott, but how is Bruce going to handle the idea of a pregnant male?"

"Bruce is an ex-UNCLE agent. Believe me, he knows how to keep a secret."

"And you got the Old Man to agree to all of this?"

Scott grinned. "Let's just say that I know where all the bodies are buried."

Finally, Napoleon turned to his partner. "And you're okay with this?"

"Considering the alternative; being hidden away for five months in some unused room in UNCLE headquarters," he cringed, "I'm more than okay with the idea."

"Well, I guess that pretty much settles it. I'll go talk to Mr. Waverly and see if I can play bodyguard for you."

"I do not NEED a bodyguard," Illya objected through gritted teeth.

"Of course you don't," his smooth voice dripped with false sincerity. "But I'll need some kind of excuse to come along with you to the safe house." Opening the door, the older man made a sweeping motion of his arm, signaling his lover to lead the way.

When they found themselves alone on an elevator, Illya pulled Napoleon into a full-bodied hug.

Startled by the gesture, Napoleon quickly brought his arms around the smaller body, and reveled in the feel of the feather-soft blond hair against his cheek. They stood like that for several seconds before the elevator neared their desired level, and Illya was forced to draw back.

Disappointed by the lose of contact, Napoleon asked, "What was that for?"

"You were right."

"Of course I was right, I'm always right," he agreed without hesitation. "Right about what?"

"I allowed my anger with my father to spill over onto you. I'm. . . sorry."

He smiled, "So you do know how to pronounce that five-letter word. I was beginning to wonder." As they stepped off the elevator, he added, "Does that mean that you've changed your mind?"

"No." When Napoleon didn't respond, Illya quickly looked around to make sure there was no one within hearing range before asking softly, "Can you truly picture the two of us looking after a baby, Polya? Neither one of us is exactly brimming over with maternal instincts."

As much as he hated to admit it, Illya was right. While the idea of playing baseball and telling stories to a ten year old appealed to him, he couldn't imaging himself looking after a newborn infant. And it wasn't as if he could leave Illya to raise the child and then start to participate once the baby had grown up enough to carry on a decent conversation with him.

"I know. But it was a nice feeling while it lasted."

"I know Napoleon, believe me. This decision wasn't an easy one for me to make."

Halting his partner's footsteps with a hand to his shoulder, Napoleon focused all his attention on the beloved face before him. "Just do me a favor will you?"

"What?" the blond asked cautiously.

"Don't shut me out again. You seem to forget that anything that affects you, affects me too."

"I. . . will try."

"That's not good enough."

"Please be patient. Sharing myself with another person is alien to me. I. . ." quickly looking around to make sure they were still alone, he whispered, "I love you, but I'll need time to adjust."

"Just don't take too long. Okay?"

"Okay."

"I'm sorry Mr. Solo, abut it's totally out of the question."

"But Sir, Illya will need an able-bodied guard to keep the safe house secured while he and Scott are there."

"I'm afraid Mr. Solo, that you are needed else where. I have the utmost confidence in Mr. Kuryakin's abilities to protect himself, and Dr. Hurts. He may not be in tip-top physical shape, but he's still one of the best marksmen within UNCLE." With that, Waverly began to set out the details of his chief enforcement agent's new assignment.

"Australia?"

Coming behind the smaller man, Napoleon began a gentle massage of his lover's surprisingly

broad shoulders. "Sydney's U.N.C.L.E. headquarters was attacked early this morning by a well-organized Thrush assassination team, no doubt attempting to kill their head of Section One. There were no deaths, but their two top enforcement agents were seriously hurt, and since I've worked in Australia before I've been temporarily reassigned as their C.E.A."

"They have no agents of their own who can fill that role?"

"No. Their headquarters was set up less than a year ago with a large percentage of rookie Section Two agents."

Guiding his lover's arms to encircle his waist, Illya leaned back into the warm embrace. "How long will you be gone?"

Hooking his chin on the shoulder before him, Napoleon nuzzled into the slender neck, inhaling the light, sweet-smelling scent of the shampoo Illya favored. "Judging by the medical reports, it'll be at least three months before their C.E.A. will be fit enough to go back into the field." He sighed, "I'm sorry, Illya, I hate leaving you alone like this. . ."

Stepping out of the embrace, Illya turned to face the other man. "I'm not helpless. I'm perfectly capable of taking care of myself."

Napoleon chuckled softly. "Illya my sweet, are you ever NOT on the defensive?"

"Being on the defensive keeps one alive."

"In the field, yes, but it wouldn't hurt to let down your shields a little more often when we're alone."

"I know you, Napoleon Solo, and how you like to be the dominant one in a relationship. I have no intentions of allowing you to walk all over me."

Pulling his reluctant lover into his arms once again, Solo whispered sweetly, "Well, I'll tell you what. Why don't we go to bed, and I'll let you do all the walking?"

"Is sex all you ever think about?" Illya asked in mild irritation.

"Can't help it, lover. You've been glowing like a dancing, living flame ever since I got back from Paris." Napoleon leaned in to kiss the delectable flushed lips before him. "It's sexy as hell," he murmured between kisses, his excitement growing as he felt the lush body in his arms begin to melt.

Keeping in mind that this night was going to have to get him through three months, Napoleon vetoed the idea of sweeping his lover up into his arms and carrying him into the bedroom, knowing that it would kill the mood having to listen to Illya's "I'm not one of your paramours" speech. Instead, he slowly lowered himself and his love down onto the plush carpet, his lips still hungrily devouring every inch of exposed soft golden skin. *Once here on the living room floor, once in bed, and at least one more time in the shower,* he thought. *Hmm. . . it's been a while since we've made love on the dinning table too. . .*

Later that night, Illya gently extracted himself out of warm loving arms, entering the bathroom to administer the pregnancy hormones. Slipping back into bed, Illya snuggled close to his lover, silently wishing that he had the courage to tell his friend just how much he'd be missed over the up coming months. But he was still reluctant to give Napoleon that kind of power over him. Power can cause pain. It was a weak excuse, as he knew down to his very core that Napoleon would never willing hurt him. But still the words didn't come easily.

Third Trimester

Four months. It had been four months and nine days since he'd last set foot on American soil. Over four long months since he'd last held this lover in his arms, buried himself deep within that lush, willing body. But it wasn't just the sex he missed. He missed Illya's shy smile, his quick mind, his rare tender moments, and his biting wit. He missed holding that warm, silken body in his arms at night, completely sated from their love making, and he missed his partner's calm reassuring presence by his side during the day. For the last four months he'd felt like a part of him had been torn away, and all he wanted to do now was to hold his love in his arms, and become whole once again.

Going straight to the U.N.C.L.E. headquarters in New York, Napoleon gave his full report to his chief in record time and, without pause, asked for a two week leave, starting that afternoon.

Hiding a small smile, Waverly gave his C.E.A. a lecture about allowing one's personal life to interfere with one's work, before giving his agent the time off he'd requested, and suggesting that he could shave over an hour off the travelling time by borrowing one of the U.N.C.L.E. helicopters.

Setting the helicopter down on the landing pad, Napoleon walked the short distance to the large house. On the patio at the side of the house, he could see Scott and Bruce curled up around one another on a small cushioned lawn chair. After fifteen years of 'marriage' they still seemed very much in love.

"You two look cozy."

Unwrapping himself from this lover's thick muscular arms, Scott stood up and warmly shook Napoleon's hand. "Alexander radioed to let us know you were coming. It's good to see you. How was Australia?"

"Full of Australians," he laughed, while carefully scanning the open area, looking for that wonderful glint of white gold.

"He's inside the house," Scott said knowingly. "He was taking a nap when Alex rang, so he doesn't know you were coming."

"How is he?"

"Fine. Irritable, but fine."

"In other words, same old Illya," he smiled.

Suddenly realizing his manners, Scott introduced his lover to Napoleon.

"It's nice to meet you, Bruce. Scott's not told us a thing about you."

The large, hulking man smiled. "He always was good at keeping secrets. Your Illya on the other hand. . .for the last month he's been starting every other sentence with 'Napoleon this,' and 'Napoleon that.' He probably won't come out and say it, but he's missed you very much."

Napoleon was warmed by the thought. "You seem to have come to know him quite well over the past several months."

"Call it a gift."

Slapping Bruce playfully on the arm, Scott explained, "He likes to think he can read anyone like an open book. The annoying thing is that he's right most of the time."

"Sounds like the two of you were made for each other. I wouldn't be surprised if you both took bets on other people's behavior."

Scott hooked his arm through his partner's and smiled, "Looks like our secret's out."

While he was enjoying the banter, Napoleon was anxious to see the one person who could make him go weak at the knees. "Well, I'd love to sit and chat all day, but. . ."

Scott understood immediately. "Of course. We'll stay out here for a few hours to give the two of you some privacy. The front door's unlocked, and Illya's room is on the second floor, first room on the right."

With a heartfelt thank you, Napoleon left the two men to their own devices, and walked over to the house. Entering, he headed straight for the staircase and to the room where his sleeping beauty was waiting.

Quietly opening the door, he stepped into the darkened room, stopping when he saw the familiar form lying on his side on a king-sized bed. His view drifting down from his lover's relaxed face, his eyes became glued to the generous bulge of his abdomen, covered in an oversized sweatshirt. *My God, he's having twins!* It's not like Napoleon had never seen a woman in the last stages of pregnancy before, but it still didn't prepare him for the sight of just how much Junior would have grown within Illya's body.

Silently walking over to the bed, he gracefully knelt down to eye level with his Russian love, and gently carded his fingers through Illya's overlong golden locks. *Probably didn't trust Scott or Bruce to cut his hair,* he thought absently.

He was so lost in the feel of silk, that he was unaware of warm loving blue eyes watching him. "You do realize that if I ever go bald, I'll be blaming you."

"Hello to you too," he replied, bringing his head down to warm receptive lips.

When they broke for air, Illya complained, "Three months, huh?"

"Give or take a month," he grinned.

The blond traced the tired lines on the American's face, "You look tired, Polya."

"I haven't had a good night's sleep in four months," he admitted.

"Then what are you waiting for?" the Russian asked, patting the space behind him.

"You ah, seem to be lying on my side of the bed," he noted with amusement.

"Get used to it."

"Since when do you like sleeping on this side?"

"Ever since Junior decided that he preferred it this way."

"Junior?"

"Yes, you know, the small bundle of joy that wormed its way into our lives," he explained sarcastically as though to a child.

Napoleon was confused. "What's Junior got to do with any of this?"

Sighing, Illya awkwardly turned over onto his other side, and moved to the other side of the bed. "Come here," he ordered.

Walking around the bed to the side his friend was now on, Illya gently took his hand and placed it high on his stomach.

Napoleon's eyes widened. "The kid's got one hell of a kick."

Illya was far from overjoyed. "Indeed, and he'll continue to kick unless I sleep on my right side, on YOUR side of the bed."

"Picky, isn't he? Maybe Junior missed me?"

"And maybe he's just trying to be a pain in my side," Illya countered, as he struggled into a sitting position and swung his legs over the side of the bed.

"If that's the case, he's a regular chip off the old block."

Ignoring the jibe, Illya held out his arms, "Help me up, would you."

Napoleon couldn't help but smile as he hauled his lover to his feet. It wasn't often that Illya asked for help. "Where are you going?"

"To the bathroom. Again!"

When Napoleon started to follow, Illya stopped him. "I missed you, Polya, but I didn't miss you THAT much." He brushed the back of his hand against Napoleon's stubbled cheek. "Get comfortable on the bed, I won't be long," he promised.

Less than five minutes later, Illya was slowly, but carefully lowering himself onto the bed, his back to Napoleon. Once he was settled, Napoleon wrapped his arms around his chest, and pulled Illya back to lay against him. The American sighed with contentment. *Home at last,* he thought before drifting off to sleep.

The next morning, Napoleon sleepily reached out to gather his partner into his arms. Realizing he was alone in the bed, he sat up quickly and began scanning the bedroom, relaxing his guard when he saw Illya in front of an open window, sitting on a chair with his legs raised on a high stool while reading a book. The morning sun streaming through the glass surrounded the Russian, enveloping him in a soft glowing light, causing his blue eyes to shine like polished gems and his hair to glow like a mixture of dark honey and white molten gold. He held the book in his right hand, while his left hand kept a steady rubbing pressure against his ribcage.

"Good morning. I was beginning to think you'd sleep the day away."

Yawning, Napoleon settled back against the headboard. "What are you doing way over there?"

Illya rolled his eyes, and explained in exasperation, "I had to get out of bed early this morning to get a glass of water. I didn't bother going back to bed since I'd just have to get out again to go to the bathroom."

"Why aren't you wearing your glasses?"

Illya placed the book on the nearby dressing table. "I scratched one of the lenses a few weeks ago."

"I don't suppose you'd like to come over here and fool around a little before we head downstairs for breakfast?" Napoleon asked hopefully.

"Napoleon, my feet are swollen, my back hurts, my ribs ache, I'm drinking like a fish, and I'm making five hundred trips to the bathroom every day. Sex is the last thing on my mind."

"You could just lay back and let me do all the work," Napoleon tempted.

"And you could just go and have a cold shower."

"I take it that's a no?"

"You have to ask?"

Regretfully, Napoleon wearily got out of bed. "Let me wash up first before we go downstairs."

"Polya?"

"Yes?"

"I'm not in the mood for sex, but. . ." Blushing, Illya suddenly halted.

"But what?"

"I would. . . like a hug," he asked shyly.

His face lighting up, Napoleon dropped to his knees beside the chair, and pulled the smaller man into his arms. After a little awkwardness, they both found themselves in a comfortable embrace.

"I think I missed this most of all," Illya whispered, nuzzling into Napoleon's strong neck.

Napoleon didn't think of himself as a sentimental person, but Illya's quiet words made his heart sing. Yes, today was going to be a beautiful day.

It had been a rotten day! Shortly after breakfast, Illya had knocked over a low sitting potted plant. When Napoleon had teased him about his clumsiness, Illya had given him a five-minute lecture regarding the difficulties of being graceful when one couldn't see one's feet. A few hours later, they'd gone for a walk, but when Illya started to breath heavier than Napoleon was used to, the older man had demanded that they return to the house. Of course in retrospect, ordering Illya to do anything was the wrong approach when it came to their personal lives. Illya HAD headed back to the house, in a snit, snapping at Napoleon not to coddle him. The rest of the day just went downhill from there, with everything coming out of Napoleon's mouth being taken the wrong way by his partner. How the hell Scott and Bruce had lived with Illya's short-temperedness for four months, he didn't know. When Illya had retreated back into his bedroom later that afternoon to lie down for a while, Napoleon gratefully escaped to the living room for a little peace and quiet.

"Tough day?" Scott asked as he sat down next to the dark-haired man.

"You could say that. Has Illya been that sensitive for the past four months?"

"Not really, it's only gotten bad the last couple of weeks, which is understandable," he defended. "His body's been through a lot of changes, and these days he's more than a little physically uncomfortable, which in turn makes it harder for him to sleep at night, which makes him tired and irritable. You also have to take into account the fact that he's been trapped here on the estate for over four months. He's had a few visitors over that time, but aside from that he's had no other outside influences. At least Bruce and I have been able to travel into town from time to break up the monotony."

"He's had visitors?"

"Mark and April visit whenever they're nearby. Darren and Helen have also stopped by a few times."

"So he's still going through with the adoption?"

"You thought he'd change his mind?" Hurts asked curiously.

"I don't know. I thought perhaps that as the pregnancy progressed, he'd become attached to the baby."

"Napoleon, I've been living with Illya for four months now. I've seen him at his best, and at his worst. I've heard him curse the day the two of you ever crossed the path of Doctor Marsen, and I've seen him sitting in a rocking chair, caressing his stomach and softly singing a Russian lullaby. Now does that sound like a parent who isn't emotionally attached to his child? Believe me, this is anything but easy for him, but he believes that this is the best thing for the child. And when he does give this baby up, he's going to need you to be there for him."

Illya singing Russian lullabies? It made his heart ache to think of all the precious moments he'd missed during his enforced stay in Australia. Damn it! Illya was right. How many more moments would he miss if they kept this child? Would he be halfway around the world on a stake-out when Junior was taking his first steps? And who would be there to hear the small child's first words? And what would those words be? Thrush? UNCLE? The pain in his heart grew and radiated through his chest.

Looking up, clouded brown eyes met sympathetic hazel eyes. "Scott. . . thanks." Getting up from the couch Napoleon felt a sudden need to be close to his lover.

Illya was still awake when he walked into the room.

"Did you come up here to tell me I'm fat?" the Russian asked defensively.

"I didn't say you were fat."

"No, no you didn't. I believe the word you used was 'huge'."

The dark haired agent looked up to the ceiling. *Why the hell do I love him so much?* "Look, I'm sorry I called you huge. I'm sorry I got over-protective during our walk. I'm sorry I called you clumsy, and while I'm at it, I'd like to apologize for any other wrong things I may say in the near future. Now, does that cover everything?"

An almost hidden smile appeared on the blond's face. "You forgot about the 'irritable' remark."

Napoleon walked over to the side of the bed and gently ran his hand down Illya's arm. "Now THAT I'm not about to apologize for. You ARE irritable, and you know it."

"Maybe," he grudgingly agreed. "Just a little bit."

Sitting at the foot of the bed, Napoleon began a soothing message of the Russian's swollen, bared feet. "A little bit? You could try the patience of Mother Teresa."

"I've met Mother Teresa, and she thought I was a nice young man."

"She probably thought you were the devil come to tempt her into anger."

"Polya, maltchee ee potselooy meenya." Shut up and kiss me.

Smiling, Napoleon quickly complied to the request.

What followed was the most unusual, gentle and fun session of lovemaking both men had ever experienced. The highlight had been when Napoleon was gently preparing to enter his lover. Illya was lying on his side, as Napoleon carefully stretched the tight ring of muscle, when suddenly he started laughing. Solo knew Illya loved the feeling of being taken and loved, but never before had it produced laughter in the small blond.

Stopping his preparations, he asked, "What's so funny."

Willing his laughter to subside, Illya finally explained, "Junior has the hiccups."

"The hiccups?"

"Yes."

"Junior?"

"Yes."

His arm came around to encircle the large abdomen. "In here?"

"How many times do you want me to say it?"

"But that's not possible, is it?"

"Are you going to make love to me, or are you going to grill me?" Illya asked a little impatiently.

"Make love first," he said, as his gently nibbled one perfectly formed ear, "grill later."

Illya let out a low moan of contentment as Napoleon carefully and gently entered him, taking possession of his heart and soul. "Just make sure that it's much, much later," he sighed.

One week later, and Illya had given birth to a healthy, tiny baby girl.

Napoleon had been in the delivery room during the Caesarian section, and he knew that for the rest of his life, he would carry with him the look of wonderment and love on the Russian's face, as the small bundle was tenderly placed into his arms. It was the first time he'd ever seen his lover cry. Not hysterically or uncontrollably, just large glistening tears rolling quietly down his cheeks. Gently wiping the tears away, Napoleon was surprised to feel the same dampness running down his own face.

Kissing the impossibly small fingers, Illya softly murmured, "Now I understand."

"Understand what?" Napoleon asked, as he soothingly stroked the golden bangs back from Illya's flushed face.

"Why my father couldn't let me go," he choked. "Napoleon, I. . ." Taking a deep shuddering breath, Illya handed the child back to his partner, silently begging him to take the child away. To take her to the next room where Darren and Helen were waiting.

Savoring the feel of the small babe in his arms, Napoleon tried to picture her all grown up, slender and golden like her father, with huge blue eyes. Knowing it would only get harder by the second, he motioned Scott over and reluctantly handed him the child. As Scott took the baby out of the room, and out of their lives, Napoleon carefully leaned over his lover and pulled him into his arms, murmuring quiet words of love as the small body he cherished began to tremble. With a sob, Illya locked his arms around Napoleon's neck, and held onto him as though he were a life line, as more low choking sobs escaped past his lips.

A sadness crept into tear-soaked blue eyes that morning. A sadness that Napoleon would desperately try to ease away for the next several months.

Three months later. . .

Reading the reports that had been handed to him moments ago, the Thrush agent threw the file across the room. "Damn those two. Damn them to hell!" he yelled at the black haired man who had handed him the file. "Partnered back together again for less than a month, and already they've found the mole we placed in the New York headquarters!" He slammed his fist onto the tabletop. "I want Solo and Kuryakin dead!"

Thinking only to further his career, the black haired man spoke. "Sir, before our mole was captured, he discovered some rather interesting information that you might be able to use against them."

"It had better be good!"

He smiled. "It would seem, that Illya Kuryakin has a daughter."

Moments later chilling laughter emanated from the room, as plans were made, and death sentences handed out.

The...end??
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