

Summary: None given. Crossover Man From Uncle/MASH

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Act 1 - Little Blond Boy by Midwife Kate

The heads of UNCLE's European offices were meeting in West Berlin. Napoleon had fiddled the assignments for the security detail to work in a nice vacation for himself and his lover, Ilya Kuryakin. Mr. Waverly was to give the keynote address, then leave his European colleagues to their work. Ilya, a demolitions expert, had been drafted to oversee all security arrangements. When it came to defusing explosive devices, he ranked number one. Napoleon was there to babysit their boss.

The opening session was progressing at about the same rate of speed it took for trees to add their annual rings of bark. Unfortunately, the subjects under interminable discussion were about as interesting. Ilya stood at the rear of the large banquet room with some of the agents he was supervising. THRUSH would not be able to gain access to this room, nor the entire hotel.

"And in conclusion..." "Thank God." Ilya thought. He'd been standing for the past six hours. Movement off to his left caught his immediate attention. A little boy had somehow wandered into the room. Cursing the incredible carelessness of the security detail stationed in the hallway outside, Ilya went to intercept the kid and get him out of there. The boy looked up at the Russian agent and smiled seraphically. "I'm lost."

Ilya took the child by the hand, ignoring the astonished looks on the faces of his co-workers. He ushered the boy outside into the empty corridor. Alarm bells began to ring in his mind. There should be ten agents out here. Ilya pulled out his communicator as the little boy tugged on the Russian's trouser leg. "I have to go."

"Great." Ilya accessed the proper channel and furiously ordered ten more men to assume this critical post. He felt another tug on his pants leg as three of the new security detail came into sight. There was something odd about them. Before Ilya could figure out what was wrong, he felt a dart pierce his neck. He slapped it away and tried to bring up his automatic. It was a race between the drug and his reflexes. The drug won. Darkness.

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Ilya struggled to waken and silence the person who was groaning very loudly. He was shocked to discover he'd been making the noise.

"You are awake, mein Herr."

"I don't suppose it would do any good to ask where I am?"

"None whatsoever." The man was wearing a lab coat and surgical mask.

Inwardly Ilya cringed. He was in what appeared to be a hospital room. There were no windows and only one door with a small hatch; presumably so he could be monitored from a safe distance. Ilya's wrists were tethered to the side rails of the bed. His fetters consisted of chains covered with terry cloth padding. At least he wouldn't end up with the usual abrasions. A laboratory work station occupied one wall.

"I'm sorry about the sleep dart. I didn't think you would be willing to help me otherwise."

"What's wrong? A sudden shortage in white mice?" Ilya figured he might as well find out now what was on this man's mind.

"Oh no. We have plenty of those. Our experiments have progressed to the stage where a human subject is warranted." The man smiled. "I believe it will be best if you aren't told about my work. It will be a nice surprise for you. The man pulled out a hypodermic needle. You need to rest."

Resistance was impossible. Ilya winced involuntarily as the man inserted the needle into his subject's arm and pressed the plunger. "Guten nacht."

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The missing security guards were found asleep in the hotel laundry. Napoleon was on his way back from the airport after seeing Mr. Waverly safely aboard an UNCLE jet. The conference was over. Reminding himself to stage a kidnapping for future boring board meetings, Napoleon raced back to the city. Ilya's abductors had left no trace. Security cameras yielded tapes showing the usual complement of agents standing in the hallways. Only after careful inspection was it learned the tapes had been tampered with.

Captured THRUSH operatives were no help at all. Truth drugs resulted in some good information but unfortunately, none of it was any help in the search for the missing Russian. Napoleon slowed down as he approached a serious car wreck. Bodies were lying on the pavement, one of which possessed a mop of clear blond hair. Napoleon stopped the car and got out to take a closer look. As he bent over the motionless blond he felt a stinging pain in the back of his neck. He pivoted quickly but not quickly enough. He too, succumbed to darkness.

NS*IK*One Week Later*IK*NS

When Napoleon came to himself he was lying in a hospital bed in the West Berlin UNCLE office. The staff assured him he was fine. He could have told them otherwise. He'd been missing for a week and there were still no clues to the whereabouts of his absent partner. As soon as he was cleared for duty, Napoleon continued the search for the man he loved. Things did not look good at all.

"Check them again. And when you've done that, check them once more. Somebody must have seen something. Grown men don't just walk into thin air. We had agents all over the neighborhood. Re-check all deliveries, parcel pick-ups, staff cars, taxis, limousines, whatever it takes." Napoleon was exhausted. He'd been searching for nearly a month with nothing to show for it. The agents assigned to him were grumbling to themselves whenever his back was turned. However, no one wanted to pick a fight with the top enforcement agent; especially when he was in a mood to gnaw on fresh meat.

Two weeks later, a slightly disheveled Russian UNCLE agent was found walking along the highway heading to Berlin. Napoleon was waiting in Medical when his partner was brought in. He remained calm while the doctors and nurses checked Ilya over. Their examinations were thorough but not conclusive. None of them noticed a thin scar carefully aligned next to an older one just above Kuryakin's groin. Apart from traces of the sedatives he'd been given, there was nothing wrong with him.

During the debriefing, Ilya revealed he'd only seen one operative: a male in his fifties who wore a lab coat and a surgical mask that obscured everything except a pair of insanely gleaming eyes. He'd been asked no questions and to the best of his knowledge had been rendered unconscious for the duration of his captivity. Three days after Ilya and Napoleon returned to New York, their boss received word that THRUSH destroyed a secret laboratory located in Lubeck and the sole occupant, noted geneticist, Erich Weingarten had been killed.

This THRUSH bird sang beautifully, informing his captors that the evil organization had placed the contract on Weingarten because they thought him crazy. Considering some of THRUSH's previous lunatic plots to take over the world, this was indeed a case of the pot accusing the kettle of getting way too much sun. Weingarten must have been frothing at the mouth for his paymasters to turn on him. According to the informant, the German scientist had been hired to work on an operation that would have given THRUSH cloning techniques suitable to be used on human subjects. By the time this report reached Alexander Waverly's desk, his top two agents had returned to the field.

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It was a routine mission. They were to make contact with a friendly operative of the Albanian secret police and acquire microfilm containing the latest efforts of THRUSH to establish satraps behind the Iron Curtain. Napoleon and Ilya, covered as commercial travelers, checked into a small inn and waited for the appointed meeting time.

"Are you alright, Ilyusha?" Napoleon was more than a little concerned. Although his partner kept insisting he was physically fit, his stomach had been acting up.

"I'm fine, Polya. Airline food." Ilya rinsed his mouth out. He felt like something the wolf dragged home.

"You look a little green around the gills, mon vieux. Why don't you catch a nap? I'll wake you when it's time to meet our warbler."

"Da. Is good idea." Ilya stretched out and fell asleep almost at once.

Napoleon was really worried now. Ilya's accent seemed to come and go. After working together for nearly seven years, Napoleon associated Ilya's Russinate constructions of English with stress. The worse his partner felt, the clumsier his English became. Napoleon sat down on the edge of the bed and examined his partner. The clear blond hair was dampened with perspiration and clung to Ilya's forehead and temples. Dark smudges were visible beneath his eyes.

Napoleon gently touched Ilya's cheek. It was warm, but not overly so. He didn't seem to be running a fever. Five hours later, Napoleon shook his partner awake. "It's time to rendezvous with destiny, dushka moi. Rise and shine, partner."

Ilya opened his eyes and moaned. Suddenly he sat up, jumped off the bed and raced for the bathroom. Napoleon winced at the sounds of violent retching. A dull thump was heard then silence. Napoleon pushed open the bathroom door to find his lover slumped onto the floor. He picked up the Russian and took him back to bed. "Ilyusha, please don't do this to me. Come on,

open those baby blues..." Napoleon tapped Kuryakin on the cheek then chafed his wrists. Another moan and Ilya opened his eyes.

"I'm sick."

"Newsflash! I hate to be the one to tell you, but I kinda figured that out for myself."

"Despite being blond, I'm supposed to be the smart one." Ilya's attempt to match his partner's bantering style was extremely feeble.

"Will you be alright on your own?"

"You're not going without me to back you up." Ilya tried to sit up then hastily thought better of the idea.

"Some backup. 'I say old chap, would you mind not shooting me until I can put my partner down somewhere?' I'd be laughed out of the secret agents' club." Napoleon was very worried despite his jocular manner. He knew if he showed his concern, Ilya would attempt the impossible just to prove his partner wrong.

"Give me a couple of minutes..." Ilya was cradling his stomach and trying to keep from moaning again.

"Stay here. I'll be very careful. All I have to do is meet this guy in the sports bar down the street. Twenty minutes, tops. Then we can get the hell out of here."

"It's too dangerous, Poly. I'm coming with you."

"On a stretcher? Sorry, my love. You're staying put. I'll take my communicator and leave the frequency open. You can listen to everything, including my heavy breathing. If something sounds fishy, call in the cavalry."

"You will be okay?"

"I'll be fine." Napoleon put on his raincoat and headed for the door. "You want me to get you something while I'm out, dear?"

"No. Just hurry back."

"Roger." Napoleon left, locking the door and praying his partner would be alright.

Surprisingly, the pickup was made with no complications. The Albanian footballers had made it to the quarter-final round of the World Cup and the bar was crowded. If he hadn't been on the side of the angels, Napoleon could have made off with every wallet in the place. The codes were exchanged and Napoleon felt a small package pressed into his hand. Between the noisy fans and the excited atmosphere, the contact man could have taken all of Napoleon's clothes off with no one the wiser.

The senior agent hurried back to the inn and let himself into their room. Ilya was curled up on the bed moaning softly. "Where does it hurt?"

"My stomach. It's like somebody kicked me." Ilya managed to get out between clenched teeth.

"Can you walk?"

"Yes."

"Okay. I'll get the car. We're bugging out of here."

"Suits me."

Twenty minutes later, they were on their way. Napoleon had half dragged his partner to their car. By now, the home team had won the match and the street was full of drunken celebrants. No one paid any undue attention to a man helping his "intoxicated" friend into an automobile. As Napoleon drove toward the border, he rehearsed their story. As soon as they were out of Albania he'd contact the Athens office and arrange for an emergency airlift.

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For once, Solo's luck held. The airlift was made and fourteen hours later, Napoleon was once again seated by Ilya's bedside; this time, in the New York UNCLE office infirmary. Dr. Sidney Rosenthal had drawn blood and run a number of tests while Napoleon held his partner's hand and the occasional emesis basin. Ilya's nausea had not gone away.

Two days later, Sidney was acting strangely. He seemed preoccupied and Napoleon was becoming concerned all over again. An IV drip had been set up to help restore Ilya's electrolyte balance. Sidney took yet another blood sample and went back to his lab. The expression on his face, dazed bewilderment, did nothing to reassure Napoleon.

"Is he awake?" Sidney asked. He'd only been gone for thirty minutes. Napoleon shook his head.

"Wake him."

"Come on, Ilyusha." The two enforcement agents' relationship was no secret. Sidney didn't even blink when Napoleon gently kissed Ilya's forehead and rubbed his shoulder.

"Wha'?"

"Still hung over I see. Sidney wants to tell us something." Napoleon helped Ilya sit up.

"Okay guys. I don't really know how to say this except bluntly. Ilya, you're pregnant."

Total silence then Ilya began to laugh. "If this is your way of cheering me up, you've succeeded."

"I'm not joking. I just ran a pregnancy test. You're definitely pregnant."

"I know you're serious, Sid. How in the name of Mike did this happen?" Napoleon had finally closed his mouth.

"I think the late Dr. Weingarten was responsible. It fits. Ilya goes missing from the conference in West Berlin. He's gone for just over a month. Less than a week after he returns, THRUSH destroys a lab in East Germany. Mr. Waverly ordered a search made of what was left of this lab. Some of Weingarten's notes were discovered in a charred safe. I read them last night. They describe embryo implantation experiments and the subject is described as a young male with blond hair and blue eyes. I ran a sonic pictograph which confirmed the presence of a four month old fetus..."

"Wait a minute. I was kidnapped less than two months ago!" Ilya was not laughing now.

"Yes. Your initial blood work indicated very high levels of female hormones needed to support the development of an embryo. In addition, I was able to identify a chemical compound that is acting as a growth accelerant. The pictograph revealed a small pump and reservoir located near

the fetus. It's been metering doses of the hormones and growth compound."

"Doctor. Where is this embryo?" Ilya was trying to regain his usual calm.

"It's been implanted just under the outermost muscle layers of your abdominal wall. I'd have to perform a biopsy to determine what the artificial amniotic sack is made from. Nevertheless, it seems to be fully attached and functioning normally."

"I'm glad something is 'normal'." Napoleon muttered.

"Get rid of it." Ilya said vehemently. "Do whatever you have to. No one asked me to participate in this 'experiment' for lack of a better word. I want it gone."

"That was the first thing I considered, Mr. Kuryakin. Unfortunately, you don't have the means of developing an umbilical cord. Dr. Weingarten attached the fetus to your abdominal artery. If we sever that, and we'll have to, there's a very good chance you'd bleed out on the operating table before we can resect the vessel. At this point our only option is to hack the embryo from around the supporting arterial feed and leave everything else where it is."

Ilya looked green. "There's no other way?"

"Not at the moment. I'll need to run some more tests and consult a colleague; a vascular surgeon, for some options. I won't give away any vital information. I've got my own reputation to protect. Until this last test came back positive, I was getting ready to check myself into a psychiatric facility."

"You might want to make reservations for three." Napoleon shook his head. Thrush had tried some cock-eyed schemes to remove one or both of them from the field, but this was beyond crazy.

"For the purposes of our discussion, I will tell him that a tumor has grown around the artery and I am reluctant to disturb it for fear of the disease spreading." Sidney sighed heavily.

"What about the pain?" Napoleon had noticed Ilya rubbing his stomach and grimacing.

"We can't do much about that either I'm afraid. Masculine musculature is not designed to stretch as a woman's does. If the growth solution was not a factor, I daresay the discomfort would be less intense. As it is, Ilya's abdominal muscles are being asked to make way for a fetus that is growing very rapidly indeed. If he carries the fetus to term, in about another two to three months, we'll need to perform a cosmetic surgical procedure to restore his muscle tone."

"Great, I'm not even thirty and I'm going to get a tummy tuck." Ilya grouched.

"I don't want to load you up on aspirin because it acts as a blood thinner. The last thing we need is for you to start bleeding internally. Opiates, synthetic or not, will prove dangerous to the fetus. If it dies, I still don't know how we can safely remove it without seriously jeopardizing Ilya's life. I'm sorry boys. If we cannot discover a way to safely extract the fetus, there is a very good chance that Ilya would not survive a C-section."

"Find a way, Sidney. We're counting on you. Talk to who ever you have to, but find some way to save Ilya. He's right. This was done to him by some mad idiot and he should not have to go along with it."

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Act 2 - Oh baby... by Midwife Kate

Ilya was released from the infirmary and the two agents rode home to their apartment. Kuryakin undressed and went to take a shower. Napoleon picked up his lover's discarded clothing and

started dinner. Leaving his stew to simmer, Napoleon checked on Ilya. He found him seated on their bed staring into space, tears running down his cheeks.

"Is there anything I can do?" Rarely had Napoleon seen his lover crying. Remembering one of his female cousins complaining about mood swings accompanying her pregnancy, Napoleon assumed the hormones being pumped into Ilya's system were behind the Russian's lachrymose state. He wasn't surprised when Ilya shook his head. Both men had a tendency to want to lick their wounds in private.

"Ilyusha, moi liubov. I'm all at sea here. I don't know what to think. The only thing I'm certain of is that your well-being supersedes any other consideration. The chemical soup that crazy quack put into you is playing with your feelings, mon vieux. Dinner will be ready in about an hour. If you think you can eat, have some. If not, we'll find something that will stay down long enough to do you some good."

"Spasibo, Polyia."

"Oh-oh," Napoleon thought. "He's back with the Russian vocabulary." Napoleon sat down next to his lover and hugged him. "Shhh, my love. Sidney is going to find a way out of this. You're going to be fine. Until then, we can both take a little vacation time to figure out what's next." Napoleon instinctively rocked back and forth; his arms full of shivering Russian. "Are you okay?"

"Yes." Ilya managed to get out, then started laughing. Napoleon shook his head and continued with the rocking motion. Ilya finally got his feelings back under the iron control that hid them from everyone except his lover. "How can you be so calm?"

"I'm not. My mind is racing along at a fair clip for which I'm grateful since the thoughts galloping through there are anything but coherent. I'm simply giving you the greatest performance of my career." Napoleon leaned back and brushed the golden strands out of his lover's eyes. "Tell me what you need from me to get through this, and I'll move mountains to do it. If you want to be left alone, I'll make like a hermit. If it's a concerned pair of ears, then I'm your elephant. When you know, tell me. Until then don't forget that I love you, have loved you, and always will love you no matter what you decide or what happens." Napoleon kissed Ilya gently. "I'm going to check on dinner." He stood up, caressed Ilya's cheek and left the bedroom.

Ilya smiled. Napoleon's ability to sense his partner's moods and thoughts was uncanny. Ilya's childhood would have made Dickens shake his head in disbelief. Kuryakin's parents had been murdered before his eyes. He was sent to a gulag and from there to an orphanage that was actually a child brothel. A lifetime of guarding his feelings; weighing every syllable he uttered enabled him to scare the shit out of his UNCLE colleagues when he'd finally made it to the West.

He'd been called the "Ice Prince", the "Silent Siberian" and worse. Ilya had all but given up on making friends with the other agents when Mr. Waverly decided to pair him with Napoleon Solo. Solo was everything Ilya was not: gregarious, urbane, sophisticated, and charming. Wary of each others' reputation, the early months of their partnership were rocky. Solo, as his name implied, preferred working alone. Nevertheless, he set about to woo the prickly Russian whose delicate appearance was excellent cover for a human killing machine.

"A mind like Aristotle's and a form like mortal sin", was how Napoleon secretly described his partner.* Somehow they managed to refrain from killing each other and became tentative, then very good friends. Just over four years into their partnership, Ilya suddenly reverted to his taciturn demeanor. He'd fallen in love with the womanizing Napoleon at their first meeting. Pride kept him silent. A craving for companionship kept him at Solo's side. He'd reached a breaking point.

Mr. Waverly, in another move that seemed like second sight, guessed Ilya's problem and gently nudged Napoleon to look again at his partner. Napoleon needed no urging. He was finding it

increasingly difficult to look anywhere else. His numerous "dates" were actually closeted lesbians who used his amorous reputation as "cover". Now, on occasion, Napoleon wondered what these lovely ladies were doing to keep up appearances. When he declared himself to Ilya, he happily took himself off the market.

Ilya rose and went to wash up for dinner. His stomach still ached, but he could live with it. His ability to endure pain was legendary. Once, when an UNCLE nurse was delayed on the way to remove stitches from yet another injury, she walked in on Ilya calmly pulling them out. He never made a sound. The stew smelled delicious. So far so good. He never knew when an aroma would send him hurtling for the nearest waste receptacle.

Napoleon dished up a smallish serving for his partner and a regular portion for himself. Ilya fell on the food like a starving man. When he asked for a second helping, Napoleon urged him to wait awhile. It was a good thing he did, fifteen minutes later, Ilya ran for the bathroom.

"Sorry, Napoleon." Ilya came back still looking a little wan. "It was wonderful even if it didn't stay where it belonged." Ilya was still hungry despite everything.

"Ilya, I've been thinking."

"I recommend the pastime highly." Ilya sipped some water.

"Sidney said the thingie is located over your stomach. Perhaps it's exerting pressure, making it harder for you to digest solid food."

"Why Polya, I'm supposed to be the scientific genius, remember?"

"Yeah, liubov. But it's my turn to experiment." Napoleon scooped some of the stew into their blender and set the controls for "puree". Pouring the thick concoction into a large mug, he handed it to Ilya. Another mugful later, and there was no sign of impending disaster. The two men looked at each other and grinned. "Okay, problem solved. You're now on a liquid diet and eat maybe six or seven small meals a day."

"Brilliant. My teeth will fall out due to lack of exercise, but I think you may have something."

"Don't worry about your teeth. Look at it this way, if you decide to retire, you could make a fortune giving blow jobs."

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Ilya tried to return to his work in the lab but found himself unable to concentrate. Pain and nausea made enforcement work impossible. His emotional state had evened out somewhat due to sheer force of will. The pain however, refused to be ignored. His co-scientists respected Kuryakin's brilliant mind but they did not find their boss a very sympathetic character. Ilya's chief assistant, Vashti Suda was a former child prodigy like himself. She noticed her superior moving stiffly and saw the beads of perspiration on his upper lip.

UNCLE was like any other large corporation; a rumor mill. News of Ilya's recent stay in the infirmary had filtered its way through the building. As the two scientists waited for the centrifuge to do its work on a compound they were analyzing, Vashti seized the Russian by the horns. "Ilya Nicolaievitch, you are obviously still in pain from your last mission. Why don't you stretch out in the lounge. I'll call you when this is ready for analysis." Her voice was low. No one else heard.

"I'm fine, Miss Suda. Thank you, but I prefer to keep working." Ilya's attempt at a reassuring smile was grotesque.

"With all due respect, Ilya Nicolaievitch, you are *not* fine. Your hands are shaking. This solution seems to be fairly benign. What happens when you try to handle a less friendly one? If anyone else was acting as you are, you would have sent them home hours ago. I know what it is like to be reluctant to show weakness. You are not in any danger of losing your rank or privileges here."

"Miss Suda...", the centrifuge came to a stop. Both scientists reached for the test tube. Vashti lightly batted Ilya's hand away and retrieved the compound. Frowning, she held it up for him to see.

"The inert material has separated itself very nicely, let me draw off the suspicious portion and we'll run it through the chromatograph." She stood up and headed to another workstation. Ilya remained where he was. When Vashti looked back she nearly dropped the compound. Ilya's face was dead white, his teeth were clenched. Hastily setting the test tube into a secure rack, Vashti went to help her boss.

The other scientists glanced up as the odd pair walked slowly to the lounge. Assuming Ilya was suffering from the flu or some such, they returned their attention to their projects.

"Would you like me to call Mr. Solo?"

"No! Sorry, no thank you. One mother hen is more than enough." Ilya groaned and leaned over towards a trash can.

Vashti waited for her boss's stomach to settle itself. "Can you tell me what's wrong?" She handed him a cup of water from the cooler.

"I might as well. I'd planned to ask for your assistance anyway; just not yet."

"Okay, I'm listening." Ilya explained everything they'd learned thus far and waited for Vashti's humorous reaction. She disappointed and thereby impressed him. "I would like to see what's left of Weingarten's notes and all of the results from your tests."

"You believe me?"

"Of course. Ilya Nicolaievitch, although you possess an excellent, if somewhat unorthodox, sense of humor, you'd never make a joke of this sort. Your partner perhaps..." Her light brown eyes shone. "You are a scientist first and last. Your other activities are merely field tests of the work you do here. You do not have to concern yourself with my ability to keep my mouth shut. I knew you were in love with Mr. Solo three weeks after Mr. Waverly assigned you to work with him."

Ilya's mouth fell open. His pain was forgotten for a moment. "How?!?..."

"You and I are a lot alike, Ilya Nicolaievitch. We keep to ourselves and rarely admit anyone within the barriers we've erected against the distractions of what is called human social interaction. We are both cursed with fine minds encased in physical forms that are also highly distracting." She actually blushed and Ilya realized for the first time that she was a very beautiful woman.

"Finally, we are both rather obvious minorities. Although your skin is pale, your accent and national origin belong to a country most Americans consider to be a deadly enemy. I broke your 'code' not long after I started working here. But since my discoveries had little to do with science, I never referred to them."

"Thank you, Vashti. I am in your debt." Ilya said solemnly but with a twinkle in his eye.

"Now, why don't we get those files from Dr. Rosenthal and figure out how we can help you walk, stand up, and all of that other nonsense without looking like an eighty year old."

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Napoleon wasn't lying when he said his mind was racing. After reading the same paragraph for the fifth time he gave up. Sidney had briefed Mr. Waverly who'd asked to be kept informed of his number two enforcement agent's health status. Citing an unwillingness to unduly tax Ilya's emotional equilibrium, Sidney recommended that both men be pulled from field duty. Mr. Waverly agreed with the stipulation that if an emergency arose, he would have to send Napoleon out with another partner.

Getting himself a sandwich from the cafeteria, Napoleon figured Ilya had forgotten to eat. He added a bowl of chicken noodle soup and some crackers to his tray and headed for the lab. He met a very pale looking partner and Miss Suda on their way to the infirmary. Napoleon swung in behind them.

Dr. Rosenthal was on his own lunch break so the four of them sat down. Napoleon pushed the soup towards his partner who shook his head. He'd gone from an unbecoming white to a bilious green. Sidney got up and fetched a hypodermic from his office. "Drop your trousers a bit, Mr. Kuryakin."

"What is that stuff, Sidney?" Napoleon wanted to know.

"Compazine, a moderate dose." The middle-aged doctor replied as he swabbed a spot high on Ilya's buttocks. Ilya didn't even flinch when the needle went in. Napoleon looked away.

"Chicken." Ilya muttered to his partner.

"Yeah, tovarich and my sister is waiting in that bowl along with a few noodles so eat already."

"Okay, what brings you people to my office? As if I didn't know." Sidney washed his hands and seated himself once more.

"I would like to see Weingarten's notes and the test results you have on Mr. Kuryakin." Vashti said simply. "I'm a chemist; a good one. I'll leave it to the medical professionals to deal with the moral and psychological aspects of this situation. I'll stick to what I know best: pure science. You're going to need someone you can trust to verify the accuracy of your own case notes and process any blood work or tissue samples. I volunteer."

"Thank you, Vashti. The fewer people we bring in on this the better. My partner is a surgeon, so when the time comes, we'll have his expertise *and* his total discretion."

"Ahhm how long have you two worked together?" Napoleon wanted to know.

"We don't. Geoff and I are partners in the same sense that you and Ilya are."

"Why Sidney, you've been holding out on me. My mother always wanted me to marry a doctor."

"You did, Poly. My doctorate is in quantum physics."

"So it is, moi liubov."

"How are you feeling, Ilya?"

"Like shit."

* ...form like mortal sin. This line was lifted verbatim from James Goldman's play, "The Lion in Winter."

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Act III - I'm not going to start knitting little booties... by Midwife Kate

Vashti Suda waited until the day shift ended before opening the late Dr. Weingarten's notes. Some kind soul had transcribed the originals sparing her from trying to decipher the crazy genius's crabbed handwriting. The procedure must have been divided into three stages. A cloning expert, Weingarten would have had access to ova from human females. The original genetic material would have been irradiated and removed from the tiny cell.

Genetic material from Ilya and an unidentified donor was substituted. A gap in the notes obliterated the next two pages. It seemed these missing paragraphs must have contained details regarding the genetic composition of the embryo and the means used to create an artificial amniotic sac. The mad doctor noted the zygote had begun to replicate itself after a week's occupancy in a test tube filled with viable amniotic fluid harvested from God knew where. The tiny embryo was implanted within the in situ amniotic bubble. The pump containing the required hormones and growth accelerant was also implanted. Micro- surgery enabled Weingarten to resect Ilya's abdominal artery.

This nutrient source was attached at the nearly invisible bud which under normal circumstances would be the embryo's contact point with its mother's umbilical cord. The artery's normal path was restored on the posterior surface of the fluid sac; allowing wastes from the embryo to be processed eventually through Ilya's kidneys. The main problem was the accelerated growth of the fetus. As it developed, the abdominal artery was being subsumed. Even if the extraction went smoothly and clamps successfully put a temporary halt to blood flow, there would not be enough artery remaining to enable surgeons to reconnect it.

Vashti made notes in Sanskrit and smiled. No one in the lab would be able to translate what she had written. She also took the precaution of changing the pronouns to female ones. References to ectopic pregnancies should obscure the truth from all but the most discerning. Just as Weingarten's observations reached a discussion of harvesting techniques, the notes came to an abrupt end. Vashti realized safe extraction or termination would have to be the first problem solved.

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Ilya was furious. Low doses of analgesics merely took the worst edge off the almost constant pain. No position was comfortable: sitting, standing, lying down... it did not matter, they all hurt. Napoleon was wakened one night when he heard Ilya weeping in the bathroom. Ilya had discovered hot water afforded some relief and he often took long showers or sat up to his neck in the bathtub until he resembled a blanched prune.

Napoleon found his partner staring at his reflection in the full- length mirror. At just over three months, Ilya's belly resembled that of a woman at the start of her third trimester. The sight of his mis- shapen physique had sent the Russian over the edge. "What is wrong, moi liubov?"

"Look at me! Isn't it obvious?" Ilya snapped.

Secretly, Napoleon thought Ilya looked wonderful but knew better than to voice his fascination with his lover's new silhouette. He liked living and wanted to be able to continue. Not trusting his fatigue- fogged brain to make sense, Napoleon stepped up behind Ilya and put his arms around the irate man. Gently stroking Ilya's arms, Napoleon was not surprised when Ilya turned towards him and began to sob with renewed intensity.

"Shhh, strong heart. You must feel awful. This is a terrible thing to have happened. I don't know how you've managed to make it this far without throwing things. I'm sure Vashti, Geoff, and

Sidney will come up with something. They're working almost around the clock."

"You keep saying that and so far, they've come up with nothing! I'm sick of this, Napoleon!"

"Okay, then tomorrow we ask Sidney to remove the thingie. You've suffered enough dushka moi. I would have done it weeks ago." Napoleon continued his soothing strokes. Ilya said nothing. Thanking God that peace was reigning once again, Napoleon started to suggest Ilya lie down when he noted the extremely odd look on Ilya's face: a combination of shock, bewilderment, and wonder. "What happened? Are you alright? Should I call Sid?"

Ilya took Napoleon's left hand in his and placed it over his swollen stomach. At first, Napoleon too wondered what was going on then he felt it--a fluttering motion that was actually distending the muscle wall. "What in the name of God?..."

"It's moving." Ilya's voice was reduced to a whisper. "I think it turned over."

"Are you sure?" Napoleon had been briefed fully regarding possible complications one of which was spontaneous abruption of the fetus from its supporting muscle wall.

"It doesn't hurt any more than usual, Napasha. In fact, the pain is not as bad as before." Ilya was smiling at his lover's reflection. Napoleon thought he'd never seen such tenderness in his partner's eyes.

"Do you think you could manage to get a little sleep?" Napoleon asked softly.

"I'll try."

"Come to bed then, I'll hold you until you drift off." Napoleon followed Ilya back into their bedroom and eased him down onto his side of the bed. He covered his partner with the duvet and then crawled in on the other side. Ilya rolled over onto his right side and into Napoleon's arms. "Sleep, strong heart. You must be exhausted. Close those magnificent eyes of yours and dream sweet dreams." Napoleon gently kissed Ilya's lips and was surprised when the Russian opened his mouth and sucked on his partner's quiescent tongue."

"Don't start anything you'll be too sleepy to finish." Napoleon chuckled when Ilya released his mouth."

"Shut up and kiss me again."

What followed was the most erotic experience of Napoleon's life. Ilya seemed to forget all about the pain and was using his hands to harden his eager partner. Frottage was a vastly under-rated sexual technique and Ilya had obviously made a study of it. Lying on their sides, belly-to-belly, both men's hands were happily occupied stroking, teasing, and pleasuring each other. Suddenly, the third party decided to get into the act. Or maybe the "thingie" was performing the embryonic equivalent of pounding on the walls to make the neighbors hush up. At any rate, when Napoleon felt the strong fluttering against his stomach he came violently; sperm coating his lover's fingers.

Ilya hadn't achieved his own climax so when his higher brain functions returned, Napoleon scooted down on the mattress and swiftly inhaled the throbbing cock. Ilya's moans were music to his lover's ears. This had nothing to do with pain. Napoleon took his time, laving the shaft with his tongue, teasing the weeping slit at the tip, then swallowing the lovely thing once more. Ilya's release was explosive and once again, the fetus responded.

"Oops, I think we woke the baby..." Napoleon spoke before he realized that silence may have served him better. "I mean...", he shut up.

"It's okay, Napasha. He'll go back to sleep." Ilya's smile was incandescent.

"Let me get a washcloth." Napoleon offered.

"Leave it, my love. It's been too long. Tonight I want to sleep in a bed that smells like our love. Remember?"

"How could I forget?" Napoleon grinned and licked the last trace of Ilya from the corner of his mouth. In the earliest days of their sexual relationship, they'd been unable to get enough of each other. Ilya was a closet hedonist and liked nothing better than going to sleep with the essence of his partner permeating his nostrils and tastebuds. Normally a fastidious man, Napoleon was shocked to discover he too, like waking in the morning with the aromatic aftermath of their nocturnal activities spurring him to repeat the actions of the previous evening.

The two men resumed their recumbent positions wrapped in each other's arms. "Goodnight, Emperor of my heart." Ilya's voice was slurred with impending sleep.

"Rest well, my love." Napoleon settled Ilya's head on his shoulder and sighed with repletion.

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Ilya's changing profile had forced him to take a leave of absence from the office. Now Sidney suggested both men return to headquarters. He wanted Ilya close at hand for examinations and in case of emergencies. A VIP suite, normally used for visiting dignitaries and senior UNCLE officials was "closed for renovations" and the couple moved in. No one observed Ilya, swaddled in an over-sized coat, come in through the delivery entrance and proceed to the twentieth floor.

Sidney also devised a means for getting his patient down to the infirmary and back up to the apartment without being seen. The private elevator adjacent to the suite connected it to the conference rooms located one floor above the infirmary. From there, Ilya would only have to step across the hall into the elevator reserved exclusively for the Medical section.

The pain had not stopped. Now, its intensity depended upon the position of the fetus. Ilya could not eat solid food. His stomach was under too much pressure. Napoleon amused himself by cooking meals as usual then pureeing the hell out of Ilya's portion. The Medical team was racing against the clock; trying to devise a way to preserve Ilya's life. Three weeks after the agents had taken up residence in their temporary quarters, Ilya surprised Sidney by insisting that whatever procedure they devised would have to be altered so the fetus had the better chance of survival. As the once graceful agent made his ungainly way back upstairs, Sidney shook his head.

Napoleon wasn't too happy either. Late one night, he woke up to find Ilya out of bed. He found his lover in the kitchen warming a sauce pan of milk. Ilya was rubbing his stomach and singing something softly under his breath. Feeling like an intruder, Napoleon quietly tiptoed back to the bedroom.*

"I know you're awake Poly. What's wrong?" Ilya turned on the light and sipped his hot milk.

"You've changed your mind about all of this." Napoleon propped himself against the pillows. "How come?"

"I can't put it into words that make sense, Napasha. I suppose it started the first night I felt him moving."

"Him?"

"Yes. Don't ask me how I know, but I believe it will be a boy."

"Ilya, that's impossible. All in vitro conceptions are female."**

"That's not a proven hypothesis."

"Whatever. So, you felt it... him moving and all of a sudden you developed maternal instincts?"

"Please Napoleon, I am not about to start knitting little booties. No, I simply realized that just as *I* didn't ask to be experimented on, neither did this baby. Why shouldn't it have every chance to live?"

"Because that would result in your death?" Napoleon couldn't believe what he was hearing.

"Not necessarily. I think Sidney may be able to find a way to preserve both our lives."

"And then what?"

"Then the pain will begin again." Ilya hung his head.

"Ilyusha, forgive me, but I don't understand."

"We can't keep him, Polya. It wouldn't be fair to any of us."

"You've lost me totally."

"Think about it. We both love our work and why not? We're very good at what we do. Also, unlike a professor or stock broker, our work is vital. You and I both know that on at least two separate occasions, we saved a good portion of the world's population. And this provides another reason for giving him up. Our faces adorn THRUSH dart boards from here to Outer Mongolia. We are at the top of their two-most-wanted lists. If our child were taken by the enemy could you live with yourself if you didn't use any means in your power to have him returned safely? I know I couldn't." Ilya set down his mug and turned to face Napoleon.

"So, if neither of us is willing to retire, as if THRUSH would leave us alone even if we did, and the child's presence compromises our ability to do our work; what else can we do?"

"We could go away somewhere..."

"Oh yes, an excellent idea. We find some private island and never leave it again. What happens when he grows up and starts asking questions about his mother? Do we lie and say she was a 'close friend' who died? How do we explain our relationship? Could you deny a child the opportunity to go to school, make friends, have a pet, fall in love and have children of his own someday? None of these things will be possible if he remains in isolation with two aging queers." Ilya frowned. Napoleon had never heard Ilya refer to either of them using any of the disparaging terms for homosexuality.

"So, to be fair to everyone, we must give him up. I don't want to, but I'll have to. Unless you've thought of something I missed?"

Napoleon shook his head. Damn it, Ilya was logical, sensible, and right. So why did he feel so disappointed?

"Polya, this will not be easy for me. Although I have no regrets about our partnership, our love, I have sometimes wished that after we're gone, we could leave behind some evidence of what we meant to each other."

"Ilya, I had no part in this." Napoleon objected.

"Yes you did. You were missing for a week while I was in Weingarten's lab. Sidney confirmed it today. This child possesses genetic factors that could only have come from you, dushka moi. This is **our** child, yours and mine. I shall remember this when he's gone and take some small comfort in the knowledge that somewhere in the world is proof of our love for one another. It won't be the same as raising him ourselves, but it will have to suffice."

Napoleon closed his eyes to keep the sudden moisture there from spilling over. He'd suspected his own involvement all along. He vowed to himself that if Ilya and child survived, he'd find some way for them to be together.

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Sidney's talk with his colleagues had resulted in his search of the existing peer-reviewed literature on the subject of vascular surgery. Ilya was now bed-ridden. The weight of the child was placing an unprecedented strain on the abdominal artery. When Sidney's study of the medical journals yielded nothing, he was at the point of consulting a ouija board; anything to get the vitally important information.

Just when Napoleon thought the situation couldn't get any worse, a crisis flared up in South America and he was sent to deal with it. Ilya assured him he would be fine; that they both would be fine, but Napoleon had a funny feeling. His stoic partner was preternaturally calm. It was as if Ilya had gone away, leaving only a watered down imitation of himself to interact with his lover and the doctors who were growing frantic.

Vashti Suda kept her head. She was not a medical specialist, but she was very intelligent. The problem confronting them was a physical one. Somehow, they had to stretch the remaining arterial tubing in order to reconnect it after the child had been removed. Ideally, the substitute vascular material should be inserted prior to the child's extraction. This way, blood flow to the surrounding tissue would not be interrupted while the complex operation was performed.

Early one morning, the solution came to her: the growth accelerant. If it could cut the human gestation period in half, surely an augmented version of this compound could be used to cultivate the cells needed to "grow" the additional arterial tissue. Vashti jotted down some notes and vital questions before putting on her clothes and heading to the lab.

She, Sidney, and Sid's partner had also moved into headquarters; camping out in the infirmary. Once she was dressed, Vashti set out a hypodermic and three vials. She would need to harvest three separate samples: one from the pump itself, another from Ilya's blood stream, and the last from the child's. Interaction between all of them needed to be mapped out in detail. Sighing, Vashti rode the private elevator to the twentieth floor accompanied by the newest member of the team, Nurse Jenkins.

Ilya wasn't asleep when the two women entered the VIP suite. He was lying in bed, with what looked like half a library.

"Ilya Nicolaievitch? We need you to come to the lab with us. I may be on to something."

Ilya nodded and pushed the books out of the way as Nurse Jenkins brought the wheel chair to the side of the bed. She and Vashti assisted the Russian as he moved off of the bed into the chair.

"When was the last time you slept?" Ilya asked as they rode down.

"I could ask you the same thing." Vashti yawned.

Local anaesthetic was applied to the two abdominal harvest sites and Dr. Geoff carefully inserted the long needle. The embryonic sample was procured first. When the tube was filled and set aside, everyone breathed a sigh of relief. Nurse Jenkins extracted Ilya's blood sample. Then Geoff drew off some of the growth accelerant from the rubberoid reservoir. He handed all three tubes to Vashti who headed for her own lab. The analyses would be complicated and they didn't have any time to spare. Ilya was "due" in less than three weeks.

Rather than risk moving Ilya back upstairs, Sidney admitted him. "We're going to need access to you twenty-four hours a day. I don't want to have to wheel you through the halls too often. We've been lucky so far, I don't want to push it."

Ilya nodded. He'd resigned himself to dying. A ghost of his wry smile played across his pale features. "I'm getting harder to hide behind a lab smock."

Sidney nodded. He was familiar with this eery calmness in terminal patients. As soon as Ilya was settled, Sid went to call Mr. Waverly. "Send who ever and what ever you have to in order to get Solo back here. Things look bad. Very bad." Returning to the semi-private room he was sharing with his lover, Sidney tried to get some sleep. He had a feeling he would need it.

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Act IV - And baby makes two?... by Midwife Kate

Napoleon was also going through the motions. Luckily, his version of "auto-pilot" did not result in carelessness that could wind up killing him. In four days, the THRUSH birds were thwarted and he was coming home. Exhausted, he couldn't sleep. It didn't take the mind of a rocket scientist nor a quantum physicist to figure out Ilya's disconcerting tranquility indicated that he'd given up.

Sidney's perusal of nearly every medical journal was not going to help them in time. It was too late for elegant procedures. Too bad he couldn't call on some of the gonzo meatball surgeons he'd encountered in Korea. Sitting up suddenly, Napoleon thought again. Maybe he *could*.
"Open Channel C..."

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When Napoleon's helicopter touched down on the roof of UNCLE headquarters, he hit the pavement at a run. Sidney was waiting for him in the suite. "Where's Ilya?"

"In the infirmary. Relax Napoleon. I thought it too risky at this stage to move him around any more than we have to. Physically, he's okay."

"Physically."

"You've noticed too?"

"Yeah, I'm in love with the guy. He's given up hasn't he?"

"It appears so. Do whatever you can to snap him out of this."

"Did you get my message?" Napoleon quickly changed out of his field clothes and threw some cold water on his face.

"He's waiting downstairs, come on." The two men almost ran for the elevator.

A tall, gangly man with an unruly mop of black hair was waiting in Sidney's office. "Dr. Pierce? This is Ilya's partner, Napoleon Solo."

"Please, call me Hawkeye." The surgeon shook Napoleon's hand. "I'd thought I'd seen some

wacko stuff in Korea, but this takes the cake." Hawkeye grinned and shook his head.

"Do you think you can help us?" Napoleon was somehow reassured by the former Army surgeon's manner.

"Yeah, but *I'm* going to need some as well. Geoff is a good man but we need the best. Do you think you could whistle up some transport for a former colleague of mine? He's in Los Angeles: Dr. B.J. Hunnicut."

"He'll be here, yesterday." Napoleon pulled out his communicator and made the arrangements. He left the two docs to their technical discussion and went to see Ilya.

In less than a week, Ilya's condition had deteriorated. His face was gaunt. Bluish smudges ringed his eyes. The pain had returned full force. Even in sleep, Ilya's brow was furrowed. Napoleon sat on the edge of the bed and gently caressed his lover's cheek. A pair of sad blue eyes looked up at him. "I love you, Poly. Never forget that."

"As if I could. Come on, mon vieux. What's bothering you? You look like a week-old corpse. Sidney, everyone is busy choosing what they're going to wear to your funeral." Napoleon tried to smile.

"Don't wear black, Napasha. It makes you look jaundiced. Maybe that brown suit I like so much?"

"Since when have you been in a position to give me advice on my wardrobe?"

"Since always. I may not care how *I* look, but I've always paid attention to what you were wearing."

"Ilya, I'm serious. According to Sidney, Vashti has come up with half of what they need to pull both of you through this. The other half is in Sidney's office right now. Things are going to work out beautifully, trust me."

"I do Poly, but I think you should prepare yourself for the worst."

"Damn it, Ilya! You've taken everything THRUSH and God knows who else could throw at you and survived! Please liubov, you're frightening me. I cannot let you do this to yourself. Please, my love come back to me." The urbane facade was shattered. Napoleon didn't care if Ilya thought he was too needy. The vulnerable man that was usually well camouflaged behind the witty manners was known only to his lover.

"Napoleon unashamedly wiped his face. "Ilya I love you so very much. I know I made it difficult for you to believe me in the beginning, but by now you must know I'm lost without you. I need your strength, dushka..."

"Shhh." Napoleon felt some warm drops on his hands. Ilya was a very strong man. In his relatively short life, he'd endured hardships that would have shattered others. There were very few things that could break through his personal iron curtain. One of them was Napoleon. Ilya looked up at him, his eyes glittering. His partner's honest expression of need merited similar truth from the Russian. "Polya, I don't think I'll have the stamina to get through this. I've been in pain almost from the start of this nightmare. I'm worn out from fighting it. If I seem distant it's because I don't have the energy needed for emotional displays. I want to get through this; but I'd be lying to you if I didn't admit to not being sure if I will be able to." It was ironic. The worst that THRUSH agents could do to him, was generate a severe annoyance. The idea of leaving Napoleon behind to cope alone, terrified the younger man.

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The person Hawkeye Pierce was counting on to pull Ilya out of his depressed state landed at LaGuardia and was raced to UNCLE headquarters. Dr. Hunnicut was not what any of them were expecting. He was tanned, dressed in an expensive suit; the picture of a successful Hollywood plastic surgeon. He greeted Hawkeye as if he were a long lost brother. When the Californian shook hands with Napoleon, the agent saw a strength in the surgeon's gaze that contrasted sharply with his smooth manners.

"Hawkeye briefed me. Can I meet your partner?" Dr. Hunnicut shed his suit coat and put on the lab wrap Sidney held out to him.

"Come on, Beej." Hawkeye grabbed Hunnicut by the arm and headed to the isolation room.

The patient wasn't what BJ had been expecting either. Ilya was lying on his back; his stomach seemed huge. Hooking a stool with his foot, BJ scooted over to the Ilya's bedside and introduced himself in Russian. Ilya's eyes stretched wide. He gestured for the head of the bed to be raised.

"Wait a couple of minutes. While I've got you at my mercy, I might as well examine you and junior." BJ pulled a stethoscope out of his pocket and went to work. He took Ilya's pulse, listened to his heart and finally, moved the bedclothes aside and placed the stethoscope against Ilya's abdomen. After a few moments, the surgeon sat back and grinned. "This is unbelievable. I can't wait to get in there and see how this nut managed to pull it off. The baby's heart rate is fine. Yours is a little high, but that's to be expected."

"Why are you here, doctor?" Ilya asked as he was raised into a semi- recumbent position.

"To help my fellow docs. Your surgery is going to be a lulu and Sidney figured a couple of gonzo hotshots who are used to thinking fast on their feet are just what you need. Besides, when this is all over, I'm sure you'll want the best plastics man in Beverly Hills to perform the tummy tuck. Piece of cake." BJ grinned boyishly and whistled.

"You're very confident." Ilya observed narrowing his eyes.

"You betcha. The unit I worked in during the Korean war had the highest survival rate for combat casualties, bar none. I'm part of the team responsible. The main reason is standing on the other side of your bed. Relax, buddy. You've got nothing to worry about. This time, the generators won't cut out, bombs won't be falling, and the temperature in the OR will stay well above freezing. Hawk and I could do this one in our sleep. Oh yeah that's another one. We're both well rested. It's not as if you are our forty-fifth surgical case and we've both been on our feet for ten hours or more."

"We also won't be half hung over from drinking homemade vodka." Hawkeye grinned.

"Speak for yourself. I had two martinis on the plane." BJ stood up and grabbed Ilya's chart. "Where's the prep room?"

"You're going to operate now?" Ilya was having difficulty accepting BJ's blithely casual attitude.

"Of course. As a consult, I'm charging your uncle fifteen hundred bucks an hour---half my usual rate. He wouldn't want me to hang around any longer than necessary.

"Yes, but can you keep this confidential?" Ilya was still trying to digest someone being paid three thousand dollars an hour.

"Well, I don't know. Half of the beautiful men and women of the silver screen have been through my clinic and only *I* know what for and how old they really are. Good enough?"

"Da." The outrageous salary made sense now.

"In a couple of hours you'll be back to your old fighting weight. That's a promise. Come on Hawkeye. You've been in this burg long enough to tell me where a good bar is. After we get the job done, I'm buying."

"You're on." The two surgeons left the room laughing as Napoleon came in.

"Polya, where did Sidney find them?"

"He didn't. I did. Well, Hawkeye anyway. Some of us passed through his MASH unit and lived to tell about. Considering how the men looked when they went in, that was recommendation enough for me."

"You weren't wounded."

"Not so as it'd show. I lost some good friends, though."

"That explains your mother hen complex."

"Shhh. That's one of my secrets. Ah, here comes the delectable Nurse Jenkins to send you off to dream land." Napoleon took Ilya's hand in his. "These guys are the best. Close your gorgeous baby blues, and don't worry. I love you, Ilyusha."

"Napasha, dushka moi..." Ilya closed his eyes as the nurse administered the first stage of the anesthetic. For the first time in a long while, he smiled.

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"Well done, Beej. I think your bedside manner did the trick." Hawkeye scrubbed his hands. "Three thousand an hour?"

"Are you kidding? I had to say something." BJ was completely serious now. "I looked at the sonics and x-rays and I still don't believe it."

"So that makes it unanimous. What some folks won't do in their spare time. The doc that knocked up Ilya must have been a first-rate section-eight. Shit! Pregnant men! What will they think up next?" Hawkeye shut off the water with his elbow. "How's he looking to you?"

"Like a dying man." BJ said bluntly, holding up his hands. "Odds are not in our favor, Hawk. This guy's at the end of his rope and too weak to hold on in any case." Nurse Jenkins came in with sterile gloves and gowns and assisted the two surgeons.

"Let's get the show on the road. The sooner we finish the sooner we can hit that bar." Hawkeye's eyes gleamed above the surgical mask.

"Some things never change." BJ backed through the doors to where Sidney, Geoff, and Vashti were already waiting. Nurse Jenkins had the dubious honor of shaving Ilya and preparing him for surgery. She proceeded quickly and very carefully. Ilya's skin was stretched so tight, the least nick could cause a serious rupture. Napoleon watched her every move.

The sight of his partner, white-faced with sunken eyes was upsetting. The doctors had told him that time was running out. They hadn't mentioned the patient's heart was beginning to be affected by the strain of bearing this unnatural burden. When Ilya was wheeled into the OR, Napoleon followed up to the door and stood looking in the small window. Sidney waved to him and from the

expression in his eyes, grinned. BJ held up his thumb and index finger in an "OK" sign. The medical team went to work.

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Act V - Spaghetti and meatball surgery by Midwife Kate

Cracking the chemical code belonging to the growth serum kept Vashti Suda up for thirty-six hours. She missed her boss's sardonic wit almost as much as she missed his incisive mind. When she found the answer, she shook her head at the absurd simplicity of Weingarten's insane genius. The cellular make up of a woman's umbilical cord was most unusual. Included in this highly specialized tissue were cells that acted as boosters to the growth of the fetus while its pituitary gland was unable to do the work it was designed to do: send signals to the body that growth is needed. Vashti isolated the substance needed and returned to her task.

A small section of Ilya's brachial artery had been harvested and kept in stasis. Vashti submerged this half-inch section of vascular material in her solution, crossed her fingers, and went to take a much-needed nap. Her alarm clock was set for three hours later. When the annoying buzzer roused her from sleep. She immediately went to check on her experiment. The section of tissue was now one inch in length. By the time the Californian surgeon arrived they should have the six inches needed to reconnect Ilya's abdominal artery.*

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Hawkeye Pierce supplied the life-saving step needed while the fetus was being extracted. To bridge the arterial gap, close to a foot of vascular material was needed. As Sidney and Geoff debated possible measures to prevent excessive blood loss and brain damage to both father and child, Hawkeye doodled on a message pad. Suddenly he looked up and started laughing.

"We're going at this the wrong way. If your Miss Suda is on schedule, we should have what we need to reconnect the artery." Hawkeye sat forward.

"Dr. Pierce, to grow a section of vessel long enough to allow us to extract the baby without interrupting the arterial flow, we'd need to wait a week. The patient would be dead by then." Geoff said tiredly. When this was over, he planned to sleep for a month or three.

"No, we don't! All we need is viable tissue to reconnect. To by-pass the fetus, we can use anything you've got that's narrow, long, and hollow. We're not going to leave it in there! Any IV tubing of the proper gauge should do the trick!" That was the was the problem with civilians, they wanted things to be perfect from the start. He was used to patching people up for as long as took to get them to a "real" medical facility.

Sidney's mouth fell open. He looked at his partner who grinned. "Damn it, Geoff. He's right. We've been wasting time trying to figure out how to get enough vascular tissue and forgot the most basic rule of anatomy: 'keep it simple stupid'." Sidney got up and went over to a medical supply catalogue. "The heart is a pump and the blood vessels are conduits. All we need to do is jury-rig a 'hose' small enough to convey the blood from the severed artery to the re-connect point while we get the baby out of there! Dr. Pierce, you're an engineering genius!"

"No, I merely became used to making do with whatever was at hand. Let's see if we can use some of these pretty pictures to gauge the dimensions of that artery, then call 'IVs to Go' and have ourselves a baby." Hawkeye winked and headed for the door.

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Napoleon was not surprised when Alexander Waverly came down to the infirmary. "How is Mr. Kuryakin holding up?"

"So far, okay, I guess. I haven't seen anything to indicate they're panicking in there." Napoleon

said quietly.

"Has Mr. Kuryakin decided on the child's future?" Waverly braced himself for the news his two best agents were going to resign.

"Adoption, sir. We talked about it for hours. There's no way we can keep it."

"A regrettable conclusion but a sensible one. I'm sorry. If my wife and I were younger..."

"Thank you sir. We both would have loved that, but the kid needs to be placed in as normal an environment as possible." Napoleon smiled at the image of his curmudgeonly boss changing diapers and warming formula on a stove. "No, Sidney is going to take the baby to a private adoption agency and spin some tale or other and that will be the end of this."

"I think you and Mr. Kuryakin should take some additional time off." It was not a suggestion.

"Yes sir. I'd hesitated to ask before. I know with both of us out of the field for too long, the opposition tends to get cocky." Napoleon looked up as Geoff moved closer to the operating table. He couldn't see Ilya but that was just as well. Blood would be everywhere.

"We'll manage to muddle through somehow Mr. Solo." Alex Waverly observed drily. "We got by for years while we waited for you two to grow up."

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The first incision was BJ's responsibility. He figured Ilya had enough scars without giving him any more. Moving the scalpel just above the patient's groin, he opened a foot-long incision. A perpendicular cut, made at the six-inch point revealed the opaque amniotic sac. Hawkeye stepped in and began to gently search for the posterior emergence of the abdominal artery. After five minutes of careful probing, guided by of all things, a miniature camera designed in Ilya's lab, he had it. He carefully cut the rear section, inserted the tubing clamped it in place then attached the other end of his "hose" to the front section.

The surgeons waited after irrigating the field. There was some minor seepage but not enough to cause alarm. "Okay Geoff, it's all yours." Hawkeye stepped aside as Sidney's lover moved into position.

Geoff carefully slit the amniotic casing and revealed a remarkably clean baby. He lifted the child into the air and turned it so its head was lower than its chest. Ilya's hunch was right. In defiance of all known rules of artificial human engineering, it was a boy. Nurse Jenkins inserted a suction tube into the baby's throat and drained off the excess fluid. A couple of sharp slaps on the rump and he began to cry, chokingly at first then steadily. "Here you go, Nurse. Keep this youngster occupied while we try and remove the rest of this stuff."

"Yes doctor." Amelia Jenkins wrapped the child in a blanket after clamping the short arterial stump. She held up the bundle and grinned at Napoleon who was grinning back. Nodding once, she telegraphed the baby's gender.

"It's a boy, sir." Napoleon said in almost a whisper.

Geoff returned his attention to the surgical field. "Well I'll be damned. Look at this!" He pointed to the spongy mass that attached the rear surface of the sac to the muscle wall. "No wonder he was in so much pain. The damn thing is stapled in there!" Sure enough, a series of plastic clamps pierced the interior muscle layer and held the sac in place. There were nine of them. Geoff cut through the devices and removed the pieces counting as he went. When he was satisfied there was no extraneous hardware floating around in his patient, he gently gripped the sac and its

backing and began to slice through the intermittent growth that had begun to attach itself naturally to the muscles. "Okay Vashti. Bring on your part of this puzzle."

Vashti passed over the basin containing the section of artery as Geoff measured the gap. They had an inch to spare. Excellent. Hawkeye stepped up and irrigated the field, calling for additional suction; a luxury that was rare in Korea. Working from the rear-most point he carefully stitched the arterial "hose" into place keeping one eye on the clock. Clamps interrupted the flow of blood. He had twenty minutes to get the job done before blood-starved tissue began breaking down and the pressure behind the clamps built to dangerous levels. Fifteen minutes later, he stepped back and removed the clamps.

"Nice work, Hawkeye. You haven't lost your touch." BJ grinned. "Let's tuck this guy up and get the hell out of here." He took his turn at the lead position and went to work. "He's in great shape considering. I won't have to do a rad-flap after all." B.J. observed as he cut away the least tensile portions of the affected muscle groups. He resected the myotic tissue and prepared to close. The vertical incision was stitched from the inside, using sutures that would eventually be absorbed into Ilya's body. A faint line would be all that remained of this most visible portion of the large incision. The lateral cut was closed using small stitches aligned to follow the natural ridge of muscle above the groin. It would be almost invisible at the center-most section leaving two three-inch scars on either side.

"Now I know why they pay you the big money, Beej. Too bad we didn't have time to do this kind of work at the 4077." Hawkeye stretched and yawned. "I would like to get out of these bloody monkey suits and slip into a dry martini."

All during the five-hour procedure, Sidney had been monitoring Ilya's vital signs. The young man's heart had slowed alarmingly once or twice, but otherwise Ilya made it through with flying colors. "Vashti, go and give our audience the good news." She didn't have to be told twice.

"He's okay, Napoleon. He'll probably sleep for the next fourteen hours or so, but he's okay."

Napoleon hugged the petite woman. "Thank you. Thank all of the team."

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When Ilya regained consciousness, he thought he'd died. The constant gnawing pain was gone. His stomach muscles ached, but this was nothing compared to what had gone before. He'd hurt worse after a vigorous workout.

"Everything's fine, dushka moi." Napoleon was sitting in his customary position next to Ilya's bed. "How do you feel, strong heart?"

"Fine, except for a few aches. Is the baby okay?"

"Bouncing. It's a boy. How on earth did you know?"

"Gypsy blood." Ilya smiled gently. "Can you take me to see him?"

"Are you sure you want to?" Napoleon did not want Ilya to torture himself with guilt over an impossible desire to keep their child.

"I'm sure. If I don't, I'll always regret not having done so. It won't be easy, but you'll be there to help me."

"Well, I don't think Sid will let you out of bed just yet, why don't I bring him to you?" Napoleon looked green. He'd been avoiding the make-shift nursery.

"Please."

Napoleon reluctantly left the room. A door opened somewhere and Ilya heard a baby crying. He knew at once it was his son. This wasn't the result of some mystical parental bond, but a simple process of elimination. UNCLE headquarters did not come with a daycare center; ergo, the child had to be his. Lifting up the sheet and his hospital gown, Ilya was surprised at the minimal scarring. His stomach, apart from some puffiness immediately adjacent to the incisions, was a flat as ever.

"Here's your father. It looks as if he's indulging in a little vanity. You were murder on his figure." Napoleon was speaking quietly but in a normal voice. He winked at Ilya as BJ elevated the head of the bed.

"Nobody complains about *my* stitches. In about a month, you'll never know we were messing around in there." BJ had followed Napoleon, curious to see the child's reaction to its father. The baby was still crying and Napoleon needed no urging to hand it over.

Ilya accepted the bundle of blankets with practiced ease. One of the few pleasant memories he had of his stay in the orphanage was helping to care for the infant residents. As soon as he touched the little thing it became silent. Napoleon smiled, but inwardly, he was worried. Gypsy blood or no, this connection between Ilya and their child would make giving the baby away that much more difficult. He had no idea that babies with their acute sense of smell, recognize their birth parents from their body odor.

Ilya moved the blankets aside and sucked in his breath. Their child was a beautiful combination of his fathers' genetic profiles: clear blond hair, dark brown eyes, and a dimpled chin. Ilya took one of the small hands into his own, mentally counting the fingers. "Thank you, Polya. He's wonderful." Ilya's voice was almost a whisper. At this new sound, the baby smiled. Tears in his eyes, Ilya bent to kiss the small blond head.

Napoleon coughed to clear his throat. He'd never seen anything so beautiful in his life. The tense lines and stoic expression his lover's face usually wore were erased. Ilya glowed. There was no other word for it. Another cough and Mr. Waverly stepped into the quiet room.

"Ilya, have you thought of a name?" BJ asked grinning. He and Mr. Waverly had been on the phone all morning talking with adoption agencies.

"Yes. I suppose his new parents will change them; but yes." Ilya looked at his boss. Both of our names are too memorable to be used, so I thought our child should be called after his great uncle and his father: Alexander. Alexander Anthony." Ilya said firmly.

Napoleon blew his nose and wiped his eyes. He bent over and gently kissed Ilya's cheek. "Thank you."

"When will you be taking him away?" Ilya returned his attention to the now sleeping baby.

"I'm taking him back to California with me in a week or so." BJ was still smiling.

"Tell them, Dr. Hunnicut." Alexander Waverly's grey eyes were bright with humor and maybe a few tears of his own.

"Ahh, I've been talking to my wife, Peg. We have two daughters and now they have a baby brother." He beamed.

"You're going to adopt him?" Ilya's head rose.

"If you and Napoleon approve. Hey, I don't think you two would want to sever all contact. No one knows I came here. All of my friends know my wife and I were trying for another baby but our doctor said she couldn't have any more. This way everybody's happy. You two can visit from time to time as friends of my old army buddy, Hawkeye. You'll get to see him, I can send you pictures let you know how he's doing in school, stuff like that. We get the son we've always wanted. Alexander Anthony gets a mommy and daddy and two older sisters to spoil him rotten. The bad guys will have no idea who he is and he'll be safe." BJ looked as if he'd pulled off the coup of the century.

"Spasibo, BJ. Thank you for everything. Ilya was smiling now. "Polya! This is the perfect solution."

Napoleon came over and sat on the bed. He enveloped his lover and their child in his arms and proceeded to get very emotional indeed. His luck was still holding. The others quietly filed out of the room giving the family some privacy.

"There's one more advantage, Mr. Waverly. Since I know about the rather unusual circumstances surrounding the boy's conception and birth, I can discreetly monitor his health and consult with your staff if needed. In addition, God forbid, if the kid ever needs an organ or tissue donation from a close relative, I can make the arrangements without letting the cat out of the bag."

"Thank you, Dr. Hunnicut. We are all deeply in your debt. Have you and your family given any thought to relocating to New York?"

"No thanks. I've had enough excitement. I'll stick to tummy tucks and chin lifts and get rich, thank you very much. And of course raising our three kids."

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"Come on, Hawk. This isn't like you." BJ swirled the olive around in his martini. "I've never known you to keep silent when something was bugging you. Come, on ol' buddy. Give."

"I'm sorry, I didn't get to see you before you left." Hawkeye downed the last of drink in one gulp and signalled the waiter.

"Hey, don't sweat it. We met up again stateside. Korea was the snafu to end all snafus. First, last, and all through the disgusting middle it was a nightmare with intermittent psychotic hallucinations." BJ smiled sadly remembering.

"Yeah, it helped to have a good friend."

"To friends." BJ held up his glass before taking a sip. "You know, it took weeks before I could get used to the taste of real hootch. Do you miss it?"

"Yes, and no. I miss the closeness we all had. But since it was born of desperate circumstances, I accept the fact that in peacetime, half of those people would have been at each others' throats." Hawkeye admitted.

"Come on, Hawk. *Something's* bothering you." BJ put down his glass and looked at his companion.

"I thought you'd prefer not to discuss it. We were both pretty drunk at the time."

"No, I just couldn't find the words." Both men, despite four drinks each were completely sober.

"Hey, I know you love your family... I just... Skip it. As long as you're not mad."

"Hawkeye, let's get out of here. We need to talk." BJ placed some bills on the bar and grabbed his suitcoat. The two men left the hotel lounge and headed to the bank of elevators. Once in BJ's suite, Hawkeye immediately went to the window.

"Hawkeye, what we did together happens all the time in war zones. Nevertheless, I'd be lying if I didn't say there hasn't been one day since then that I haven't thought about it and you. Despite all the shit we had to put up with, that was a good memory for me. But it was something more for you wasn't it?" BJ sat on the edge of one of the beds.

"Yeah. All those nurses, lady GIs, geisha girls, stewardesses, joy ladies, meant nothing. That one time, we had together..." Hawkeye turned to look at his old comrade. "It was like I woke up. Whatever had been missing... Shit I didn't even realize anything **was** missing until I found it. When you didn't say anything I figured you preferred to forget."

"No, I was shaken up some, but I never thought it was wrong. I wasn't faithful to Peg while in Korea and although she probably knows this and understands, we've never talked about it. Those affairs didn't mean anything to me either. I wanted to believe what we did fell into the same category. It didn't. We are friends, good friends, the best. There was something there between us from the beginning. I was a little scared of it because it was just as strong as the feelings I had for my wife." BJ sighed.

"I grew up hearing the same lectures and sermons as everyone else. Homosexuality is perverted, a sickness, something unnatural. Maybe it is, although I doubt it. Anyway, with all the death and destruction around us, I couldn't find it in me to condemn any form of love that wasn't hurting anyone. Yeah we were both drunk, but when you kissed me, I sobered up in a hurry. It was like nothing I'd ever experienced before or since."

"Beej. You don't have to..." Hawkeye came over and sat on the other bed.

"No. I'm not leaving my wife and family. I do love her. I don't have any desire to sleep with other men. I cannot speak for you, my friend, but for me, what we had, what we did transcended the neat little boxes shrinks like to put people into."

"I have slept with other men." Hawkeye said softly looking at the floor. "I haven't been with a woman since I left Korea. They weren't you, but at the time, I wanted them."

"And now?"

"Now, doesn't matter. I know how you felt about it and that's enough. Times have changed, we've changed."

"We have? They have?"

"Yes. I think so." Hawkeye closed his eyes and fell back on the bed. He felt the mattress move and looked up to see BJ sitting next to him.

"We were drunk and in a hurry. The only regret I have is that we couldn't take our time and we didn't tell each other how we felt. In three days, I'm flying back to California to a wife that loves me and children I adore. I want to have a wonderful memory of our reunion to keep me company. Will that be okay with you?"

"Oh God, I thought you'd never ask me. Hawkeye sat up and embraced his dearest friend and one-time lover.

"Shower?"

"Shower." Hawkeye pulled his sweater over his head and went into the bathroom. "This beats the living hell out of those latrines anyday."

"Well we could use cold water if you want to recapture the mood."

"Are you sure you want to do this, Beej"?"

"I'm sure." BJ leaned in and kissed Hawkeye. His hands were busy undoing buttons.

"Allow me." Hawkeye grinned when they came up for air. The hot water quickly steamed up the room.

BJ whistled at Hawkeye's physique. "You're still too thin."

"I haven't been eating well lately."

"Hungry?" BJ teased as he stepped into the shower.

"Oh yeah." Hawkeye followed him in and pulled the door shut. He sank to his knees and swiftly inhaled BJ who gasped aloud.

"It's attached you know."

"Mmpflsmmm."

"I'm rather fond of it. Oh sweet Jesus!"

Hawkeye was busy making up for lost time. He proceeded with due speed to elicit an orgasm from BJ that should get the earth to moving. BJ's hands were busy, caressing Hawkeye's head and shoulders as he pumped himself into the voracious orifice. The image of Napoleon kissing Ilya appeared in his mind's eye and he lost it, spilling himself into Hawk's eager mouth. For what seemed like hours, he floated, barely conscious of the running water. Looking down, he saw his best friend sitting back on his heels, smiling.

"Get up here." He reached down and assisted his lover. They embraced and BJ kissed the angular features that were as familiar to him as his own. Hawkeye had tears on his cheeks and thanked God they were standing in a shower. He loved this man as he loved no other. When they parted this time, it would be as friends but never again would he be able to initiate this level of intimacy. He had some scruples. BJ was happily married to a woman that was fully worthy of his undivided attention.

"Hawk. I'm freezing here."

"Brings back memories doesn't it?" Hawkeye smiled and reached to shut off the cooling water. Neither man wasted anytime drying off. That's what sheets were for. BJ lay down on the bed after throwing the spread on the floor. His tanned skin was the color of freshly baked bread. Hawkeye thought he'd never seen anything so enticing. He joined his lover and they proceeded to warm themselves.

"My turn." BJ slid downwards and began to caress Hawkeye's cock with his lips then his tongue. He must have been giving constant thought to their previous encounter. His mouth soon had Hawkeye murmuring then shouting. Just when the Yankee doctor thought he could take no more, the mouth was gone.

"Wha?"

"I want you to take me. Ride me from here to Disneyland and back again. Come on, Hawk. Make me scream out loud." The grey-blue eyes were nearly black, his pupils widened with desire.

Hawkeye moved into position, stroking BJ's flanks with his long hands. "Oh shit!" What in the Sam Hill were they going to use for lubricant?

"Looking for this?" BJ produced a tube of the stuff from under the pillow.

"Boy scout."

"You don't know the half of it. Fuck me, Hawkeye." Napoleon had been more than willing to smooth the way for the man who helped save Ilya's life and who would be their child's father.

Hawkeye didn't waste any time. Remembering the last time, he entered slowly giving BJ time to adjust himself. BJ did not take advantage of this generosity. Before his partner was half-way home, BJ thrust back onto the invading organ.

"Shit!"

"Please, Hawkeye."

"In a hurry are we?"

"No. Make it hard and fast and take forever. Fuck me into next week."

"It might take that long for you to be able to sit down again."

"That's the idea. Give 'til it hurts."

Hawkeye began to thrust. He mentally reviewed ball scores, basic anatomy, anything to keep his mind off of the fact that smooth, self-contained BJ was moaning like a bull in heat. Despite his best efforts, there was no ignoring the man he loved, quivering and shouting lewd demands for Hawkeye to increase the pace. Reason fled and Hawkeye lost himself as he pounded against BJ's ass. When his orgasm hit, he shouted aloud. BJ was not far behind. All through this marathon, Hawkeye's hand had been busy. BJ felt himself splashing against Hawkeye's trembling fingers and pushed back for the last time.

"I'm a dead man." Hawkeye mumbled when his speech center finally re-established contact with his brain. "You owe me one."

"Later." BJ sighed as he felt Hawkeye slip from his grasp. "I'm not getting any younger."

"Coulda fooled me."

"Hey, some of my best friends are plastic surgeons."

NS*IK*Epilogue*IK*NS

If anyone noticed a slight stiffness in Hawkeye and BJ's posture, no mention was made. Both men rode to the airport together: Hawkeye would be taking a puddle-jumper back to Crab Apple Cove in Maine; BJ boarding a jet for Los Angeles. Little Alexander snoozed in a carry crib on the seat between them.

"I'm going to miss you, Hawk."

"Me too. Thanks for everything. I mean that." The presence of the cab driver precluded more intimate conversation.

"He's a beautiful kid."

"Yeah, like his parents." Hawkeye smiled at the sleeping infant.

"Hawk? I still don't see why you won't come and visit us."

"It's better if it's a clean break. Don't worry. I won't spend the rest of my life pining and weeping into tea cups." Hawkeye said softly. "I have a feeling Sid and his partner are going to start playing matchmaker anytime now. I'll be fine. In fact, I've never felt better except for the odd twinge when I sit down too fast."

"Is that a criticism of my bedside manner?"

"Just the opposite Beej."

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Ilya's recovery took longer than he wanted. His temper recovered in no time, however. Napoleon rejoiced at having his prickly partner back again. Ilya's absence from work spawned quite a few rumors, none of which came anywhere near the truth. Upon being released from the infirmary, the two agents also went to Maine. Napoleon's sole surviving grandparent, his Nana Rebecca had invited the couple to her large house.

Ilya had never been there before although he'd met Napoleon's grandmother in New York. Late one night, the two of them told her everything about Ilya's recent "illness." To her credit, she never blinked. Instead, she hugged Ilya tightly as he began to cry. Looking over the blond head at her other grandson, she smiled. "What was the name of that doctor in Crab Apple Cove? If I'm going to be visiting Los Angeles, I want to make sure I'm welcome."

Finis

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