Double

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

Chapter 1

“I understand that you may have known Ivan Sergeivich Molonovsky,” said the man they simply knew as Grozny – the man in charge of deployments.

“We were not close, but I remember him,” said Kiril. It was a lie. He had known Ivan well. They trained together because the two of them were the smallest in the whole intake. But the rumor was that Ivan had betrayed the Soviet Union, and it was best to deny any association.

“Some knowledge of the man would help, because we are planning for you to be inserted into the United States, by pretending to be him. There is information in the folder here, but if you met him then that might help.” Grozny pushed a dirty manila folder across the desk.

“I knew him.” Kiril was desperate to get a deployment after all these years working translation and analysis, but he could not afford to fall into a trap. “What has become of him?”

“Ivan Sergeivich Molonovsky is a traitor to the state and international socialism,” snarled Grozny. “He sold out to the Americans, but he was a fool. We found out and he has been eliminated. But now we have discovered that the American’s don’t know what he looks like, so we have formulated a plan, and it involves you.”

The gruff general stopped, as if tempting Kiril to beg to know more. Kiril remained silent, but leaned forward.

“The American’s have accepted the traitor as a source of information,” Grozny continued. “We believe that he traded real secrets for some kind of reward. It seems to us that we have lost something through him, but we may have something to gain. They do not know that he is dead, and they have never met him, so what if we put somebody else in to take his place. That person could be you? You have the same training, you speak perfect English with a Midwest accent, you are the same size and eye color. The difference is that you are loyal, am I correct?”

“Yes, General!” Kiril sat to attention in his chair. “I am ready, Sir. I can do this.”

“It is just as well as we have very little time,” said Grozny. “The traitor was due to meet at a rendezvous point in Washington DC on Wednesday 12 noon United States Eastern standard time. We need to fly you to Mexico and then get you to that place on time. You can read the file on the flight over.

“What will be my identity?” said Kiril. It seemed like a sensible question.

You will be Ivan Sergeivich Molonovsky posing as Dwight Ronald Mayne, but I don’t think either of those names will apply soon. The Americans have told the traitor that he can have the identity that he wants, but we have no name. All you need to know is that there is only one name that we will use for you – your code name will be “Apokrita”. Molonovsky has earned the confidence of the Americans by his treachery. Your job is to maintain that confidence. They will take you in and put you on the Russia desk of whatever agency of imperialism they choose. You will gather their secrets and transfer them back to us through means that will be made clear to you while you travel. The damage that was done to us by this traitor shall not be in vain. You will pose as a defector but be a double agent.”

“Or the double of a double agent,” said Kiril with a wry smile, that he regretted the very moment the words were said.

His commander simply glared at him with disdain.

Kiril took the folder from the desk and stood up and saluted.

The grizzled general flicked a lazy salute back to get the fresh-faced young man out of his office and his sight, but he added a few more words – “Just one more thing, Comrade. There could be some changes here. The new General Secretary of the party, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, is a reformer. Just remember that whatever happens your loyalty lies here, to the KGB. Understood?”

“Yes Sir,” said Kiril. He spun around and walked to the door. At last, he was headed into the lair of the enemy. It was a moment he had prepared for. It was the summer of 1986. The cold war was still running hot.

Chapter 2

It would happen in broad daylight when there was too much going on for anybody to be concentrating on one person in a thousand. There was a dark van parked around the corner of a busy street for a brief period at a precise time. Dwight R. Mayne would simply be walking down the street and would step into the lane and disappear, bundled into that van with reflecting windows, never to be seen again.

That is exactly what happened. The Russian spy pretending to be the American of that name born in Fairfield, Connecticut in November 1957, found himself sitting in a chair in that van facing two powerfully built but intelligent looking American agents.

“You’re Ivan Molonovsky?” One of them said it, or perhaps both.

“Yes,” was the reply. “I am fairly sure that I was not being followed, but I agree it is safer to be sure.” His accent was perfect. He could have been brought up in America, which is close to the truth. He had spent his high school years at the place they called “Middlevale High” just outside Kubyshev on the Volga River. Only English was spoken there. It is a KGB training establishment. He had been selected young, as the real Ivan Molonovsky had been.

The van lurched forward. The third man was at the wheel.

“The deal has been done so we are taking you straight to the surgeon as you requested,” said one of the agents. “We want you to start working for us as soon as possible, but we understand that there might be a long recovery period. But you would understand that better than us.”

“Yes,” said the new Ivan. It was hardly surprising that some plastic surgery would be required, but why a long recovery period?

“My name is Alan Johnson,” said the man, stretching out a hand. “I will be your liaison, if that works for you?” After shaking hands he added – “This is Agent Harris. That is Agent Smith driving.”

They all seemed like fake names. That was not surprising. That was the trade.

“So, who am I?” said Ivan with a grin. It seemed appropriate to show humor. A defector would be happy. He would have buried his treachery well in advance of this move.

“I have a dossier here,” said Alan. “You will have a chance to read it when you are recuperating. Your wish will finally come true. The surgeon is very skilled I am told. He does a lot of these operations. More than you would think, I suppose, not that I ever thought about it. Here you are.”

Ivan took the folder than was handed to him. It was not like the last folder he had received. That was now mere detritus. Ivan Molonovsky would soon be dead, on the garbage heap of Soviet history, and good riddance to him. He thought about placing the folder on the seat beside him, as the vehicle was moving, but first he would take a peek inside.

There was a photo of a young woman inside. He could see that it had been tampered with, like many photos he had seen – a black and white face shot that would have been blown up, retouched by hand and then rephotographed. But it was him!

He looked down at the details – “Rosemary Helen Martin, born Boston October 1957” He looked back at the photo. He could not conceal his shock.

“It’s just a retouch based on what you sent us yesterday,” said Alan. “We had no image of you before then. It is based on what can be done to the face. But of course it is the body where the real work will be done. You will finally be able to achieve your life’s ambition and become a woman. I could only happen in America – right? You must be very excited?”

“Yes”. He was in shock, but he was able to force a smile.

Chapter 3

“Where is he?” The morose frame of Grozny hung like a black cloud in the communications room of Foreign Espionage Division 7 – Operation Yankee. “It has been months since the insertion, and we have had no information drops. Has he been discovered? Have we squandered everything we might have gained from what we lost? Somebody speak! Where is Apokrita?”

“I am sure that he will make contact, Sir,” came a voice from the room. “There is a new identity, after all.”

“That is the point, you fools,” growled Grozny. “We need to know this new identity. Who is new to the Agency. We monitor their Human Relations Department, don’t we.”

“Nobody who could be Apokrita,” came the anonymous reply.

Our country is collapsing!” ranted Grozny. “We have *perestroika*, *glasnot* and now *demokratizatsia*. The nation has gone mad. The party will lose control. We will lose control. Somehow I feel we have already lost control. We cannot one puny little agent with all our resources. Have we sent messages?”

“All messages are drops, General. This operation has the highest level of protection for Apokrita. No direct contact.”

“Do we have a drop point in the public area of the Langley structure?”

“Yes Sir. It is concealed in the Men’s restroom in main reception. We have checked it regularly, Sir. We have found nothing.”

“We must send somebody in to find him,” said Gronzy. “How do we know that he has not been turned? Everything is turning out as I feared. Without the principles of communism to provide a belief structure, what kind of loyalty can we suspect. We already have those damned Latvians saying they are not us.”

“We have no sign of anybody being betrayed, Sir.”

“Betrayal? What is that? Look at the Politburo. That is betrayal. The Americans are laughing at us. They only need to wait for us to collapse.” Grozny needed vodka, and an excuse to head back to his office where he kept some in a draw. “We cannot let our nation go the way of America – a land of greed and effeminacy.”

Chapter 4

“Excuse me for a moment, I just have to go to the bathroom.” Rosy Martin smiled at the others in the communications room of the Agency’s Russian Division.

She made her way to the hall and walked past the men’s room. It was a place that was barred to her, and her floor she was happy for that. The ladies’ room was clean and pleasant, and so were the few that used it. She knew them all now, and they accepted her. It had been difficult from one or two, but she understood and was unfailingly positive. She had to be.

In her cubicle she pulled down her panty hose and panties and sat. She felt her urine pass by her vaginal lips and hit the water below with a satisfying sound. It was all so familiar now. She reached for the toilet paper to wipe herself dry. There had been no pain for some time now, although there had been at the start.

Going in to surgery had been her last chance, and more than once she considered crying out. She could have said that it was all a mistake. She could have screamed “I am not Ivan Sergeivich Molonovsky and I am not a transsexual!”. But she didn’t, and now it was gone.

She had thought since what her fate would have been. Prison perhaps, but worse than that – a failure. She had one chance to impress and she was not up to that. What would she give for her motherland? Her life? Yes. A limb? No question. Her genitals? There can be only one answer.

She had cried. She put it down to the hormones. She was told that they might make her emotional, and they did. More emotion than she had ever felt before. But somehow that was good. She had spent her whole life bottled up, and the flow that she felt with those first tears was like freedom, which was not something she knew as man and boy.

There had been phantom pain too. The feeling of a penis being burned in a fire. Zelda said that it never happened to her, so Rosy kept quiet about it. Zelda was the woman whom the CIA had hired to “help her through transition from male to female”. She was a transwoman herself, so Rosy listened to everything she said. She sometimes had time to repeat those words – about living her entire life believing that she had been born in the wrong body, and the joy of coming out of hospital with the body she had always wanted.

As she flushed the toilet and stepped out of her cubicle she saw herself in the mirror. Zelda was attractive enough, but nothing like Rosy. Zelda was big and a little heavy in her facial features. Rosy was small, and the work on the chin and the nose were all that was needed. She had those big blue eyes and high cheekbones from her mother.

But there was something not quite right. A blond curl out of place. A clumpy patch in her mascara. Lipstick that needed freshening. Just a few things to make her look perfect, and feel satisfied.

She spent so much time in front of the mirror these days. She liked looking good. She liked the way that men looked at her – longingly. And she liked the way women looked at her too – with admiration – an acknowledgement that the new girl, the Russian – had style.

The door swung open and in walked Becky Willis, perhaps the second best-looking woman on the floor, of not the complex, behind Rosy.

“Oh, Rosy, I am so glad that I have caught you in our inner sanctum, because I have something to ask you,” said Becky. That is what it was, thought Rosy as she pushed her lips together to press in the lipstick.

“Anything, Sweetie,” said Rosy. “Just ask.”

“Well you know that guy who was all over you like a puppy dog, last week … you know, codename Bruno?” said Becky, just there for the mirror and a chat.

“Oh him. The guy just back from a couple of months in the field and thinks he is James Bond? That guy?”

“Well, I know he has wined and dined you but you are not interested, so I was just wondering if I could “cut in” as it were … only if it’s OK with you.”

“How nice of you to ask,” said Rosy. It made her think how different women were from men. It was like being part of a team – team female. “You go girl. But you know he has a dreadful reputation as a womanizer and a love rat – right?”

“Honey, this is the eighties,” said Rebecca. “I will just take advantage and spit him out like you do. You are an example to all of us.”

Rosy giggled. It might well have been her full laugh, which had remained quite masculine. It was just that Becky did not know the secret of her past so she took care. Few did. That was the way Rosy wanted to keep it.

“It’s great to be a woman in the eighties,” said Rebecca, standing close to the mirror with her mascara wand at work. “In fact it is great to be a woman anytime.”

“It sure is,” said Rosy, slipping her lippy into her purse. Then, looking at the mirror one more time before she left, she fond herself repeating the words. “It sure is!”

Chapter 5

“Good morning, Rosy. You are looking particularly attractive today, I must say,” said Troy Hadrick, the Deputy Director of Counter Intelligence. She assessed that the compliment was genuine. Troy had initially had trouble with the idea of working with a transwoman, but he had come to accept her as just another woman, just prettier than most of the others working in his branch.

“Good morning, Mr. Hadrick,” she said in a chirpy way and with the smile that had made her so popular at the office. “Is there something that you wanted to discuss with me?”

“Actually, there is somebody I would like you to meet,” said Troy. “Perhaps you might even know him. He goes by the name of Malcolm Jennings, but you might know him as Mikhail Denderov. Have you heard of him?”

It seemed almost unbelievable. Had Denderov been caught? There was no way that he would have been turned. Was he in a cell somewhere?

“I have heard of the name,” she said, her brain working on how she should deal with this. If she knew the name and knew that he was in America, perhaps she should have mentioned him? She had been careful not to betray agents working for the motherland. It was not about ideology or even patriotism – it was about comradeship.

“I never met him. He is older than me and was deployed somewhere overseas, but I didn’t think he was here. I would have mentioned him if I had known his cover name. Perhaps he should have been on my list of Russian names and descriptions. Is he here?”

She had supplied a list. It was part of the plan. Names and descriptions. Half of them were fake and the other half agents who were dead or compromised, just for veracity. She had to produce something, and she had. Now had worked in the Russian Division for almost 2 years, translating and checking identities. She had made herself useful even as what secrets she may have had became outdated. She liked her job. She liked America. She liked being Rosy Martin.

“He has surrendered to us,” said Troy. “I would like you to verify that it is him. You have met him – right?”

“No,” she lied, although it was only a brief encounter. “But I could ask some questions about people and things that might confirm it is him.” She wanted to meet him, even though it presented a risk. He was part of large and important family with deep roots in Moscow. She could not believe that he would shift his loyalties, so if he was directed to be a double agent like she was supposed to be … why?

Maybe a year before she might have been concerned that he would recognize in Rosy the face of Kiril, but such a thing now seemed impossible. She never saw that face, even if she looked for it. She was so completely Rosy now. She was comfortable being her.

“He is downstairs, in one of the outer secure rooms,” said Troy. “Grab a pad and a folder or something unclassified as a prop, and come with me.”

Troy rose and opened the door allowing her to pass. That was the way he had been brought up in South Carolina, but he could not resisted sniffing her bouncing curls as she walked by him. She as just so alluring that sometimes, as a married man, he felt embarrassed to admire her the way he did. The fact of his marriage and also the fact that her panties cupped a man-made vagina, which was something that fascinated him however wrong that might seem.

As they walked through the reception area, Rosy could not help but glance at the Men’s restroom. For months when she first arrived she had looked over there and wondered how she could get access to it without being seen in that busy space. For months she had carried a coded message to be hidden in the secret drop space (the float of the ballcock in the cistern of Cubicle 3) but she had discarded that over a year ago. So much had changed. It seemed like history now.

The 19th Congress of the Communist Party had just ended in Moscow. The Soviet Union was in disarray and her job was to watch it fall apart and advise the Central Intelligence Agency. Communism was over, and with it the Internationale – the notion that the Soviet system should be adopted by all states for the betterment of the human race. As a boy, she had believed in that. But she was not a boy anymore.

They reached the secure area of the outer area, and passed through additional security to Interview Room 1.4. There was a man stationed at the door. Again, Troy held the door open so Rosy entered and saw Denderov sitting. He looked up and saw her, and he stood, but perhaps not out of just politeness.

“Mr. Jennings. My name is Troy Hadrick, Deputy Director of Counter Intelligence.” Troy held out his hand and Denderov shook it. “And this is my assistant, Rosy Martin who speaks Russian. But please, let’s conduct this interview in English.”

“Please let’s,” said Denderov. “Sometimes I think I speak it better than my mother tongue. And please, while we do, call me Mike.” He looked at Rosy as he said his name, and they all sat down.

That look seemed to have a strange effect on Rosy. It was not something that she had ever felt before. She had learned the look of lust early on. The surgeon’s work proved miraculous, or perhaps it was the bone structure that he had to work on. So many men had desired her, and that had always made her feel strangely joyous. But in this glance she felt something different. It was not the flush to the face so much as the beating of her heart, and a strange moistening and even opening, of her female genitals in her sensible panties.

“Can I just ask why you have decided to defect?” said Troy. “We have done some research. You seem an unlikely candidate. That and the fact that you have infiltrated so successfully”.

“The world is changing,” said Mike. “Democracy and globalization are where we are headed. The Soviet Union is finished. I am not talking about the ideals. If you have done your research then you will know that for my family communism has never existed. We were of the Soviet elite, and we lived very well – nothing like other people. Democracy will destroy our power and status. I am not here to trade in secrets. There won’t be any soon enough. I am here to trade in influence. I want to do international business in the future, and as an ex-spy I cannot do that. Unless, of course, I also have American citizenship.”

“That seems a little … mercenary,” said Troy. Rosy could see that he was shocked and confused.

“That is what I am,” said Mike. “Maybe I have lived in America too long. But don’t worry, I will not expect anything without giving value in return.”

Another look. Another flutter in Rosy’s chest. What was this? She could only conclude that she was attracted to this man, and it was sexual. There was no doubt about that. For the first time she wanted a man inside her vagina – this man. She had dutifully kept her passage expanded and exercised simply because she was told that failure to do so might mean further surgery was required. Now this anatomy had a purpose. All she needed was to get this man alone and naked. There was an animal inside her, and it was female.

“Do I know you?” said Mike.

“I don’t think you do, but would you like to?” said Rosy.

Troy stared at her. He had realized that there was no room for him here. He had suddenly become the third wheel.

Chapter 6

Rosy looked out across the Mediterranean Sea from her lounger on the upper deck of the super yacht “Apokrita”. A glass was arriving – a tall fruit drink with only the best vodka added. She could hear that ice clinking. It arrived and so did a kiss on the forehead.

“Is there anything else you could possibly want?” said Mike. They always spoke in English, if they were ever anywhere else but in Russia, which was where they preferred to be these days. But being seven bankers, the most elite of the Russian Oligarchs, did force Mike to spend time there. He called it a small price to pay for such wealth and luxury.

“Just your cock inside me,” she said.

“That can be arranged, my darling,” he said. “You must be the hungriest wife in the world. I put that down to your origins.” He took his place on the lounger beside her.

“Ah, my origins,” she said. “You have never told me exactly when you became aware of my origins.”

“Well, now that we are married at last, I think I owe you the truth on that,” he said.

“Let me take strength from what you have poured for me,” she said.

“I should tell you that I killed the traitor Ivan Sergeivich Molonovsky before he could present himself to the CIA. It was my idea that they found a double, or somebody to stand in his place. I even had a recollection that Molonovsky had a training partner around the same size. But then the double disappeared. I was asked to find him. To me it could only be done by getting into the CIA. I decided that I would do that myself. I did not seek approval. It would have been refused. We spies all know that the best skill is initiative, which the Soviet State hate with a passion …”.

“But you had other motives anyway?” interrupted Rosy.

“Exactly, my darling,” he said. “I decided it was time, but my last gesture was to find the double and find out what secrets he was giving away. Then I walked in and I found you. I tell you, the first time I saw you, I was in love. I never even believed in love until I met you, although I know that sounds stupid and sentimental.”

“But so very true,” said Rosy, puckering her lips at his smile.

“I could see that you were Russian and KGB. We learn to recognize it, don’t we? So where had you come from? I wanted to find out more which is why the moment I got liberty I took you to dinner and finally, after more effort than I have ever applied, I got you into my bed. You gave me nothing. You are the best spy I have ever met, excluding perhaps only myself.”

“Oh, the arrogance of this man, my conceited husband!”

“I started to turn my mind back to Molonovsky, and there was just one thing about him that I had not been able to work out. In his apartment I found some prescription drugs that were unfamiliar to me. When I recalled them I went to a pharmacy to ask about them. They were female hormones prescribed to men wanting to become women. Molonovsky wanted to become a woman. So what happened to his double?”

“At the last minute they swapped him out for a woman!” Rosy was grinning.

“Nice try,” said Mike. “No, I had problems with this knowledge, which is why I distanced myself from you for a while. But the fact is that I could not get you out of my head. I was so hopelessly in love with you, you see? I still am.”

She swung out of her lounger and onto his, and she kissed him and her body and his became one.

The End

© Maryanne Peter 2023

A friend of Erin’s sent her this idea: “A secret agent is sent out by spy bosses to take the place of an enemy agent and become a double agent, but no one told him that the person he is replacing was female” i.e. nobody knew