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Opening Extract from...

Defectors

Written by Joseph Kanon

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DEFECTORS

JOSEPH KANON



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SCHUSTER

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A CBS COMPANY

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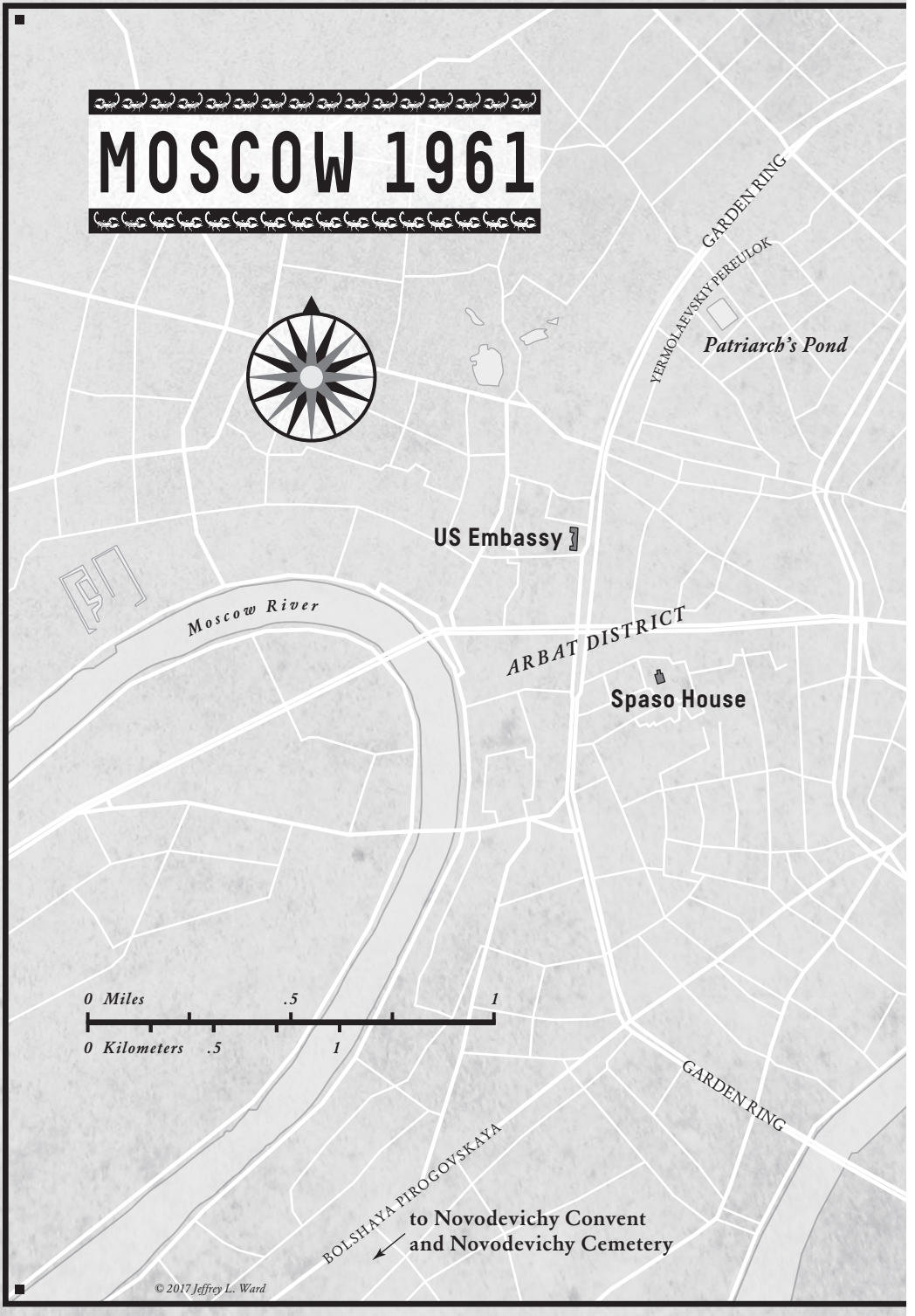
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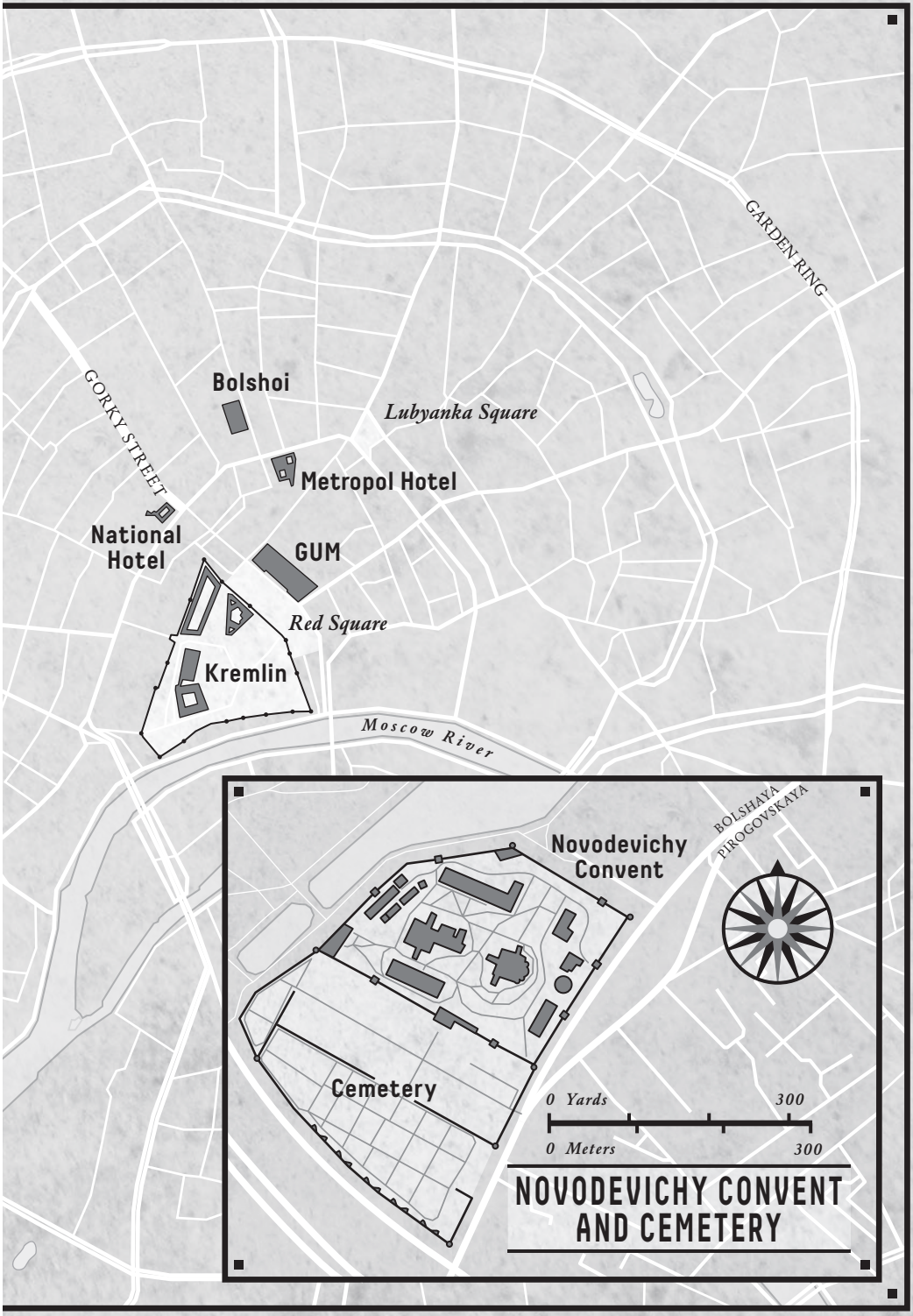
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For Marietta von Bernuth and David Esterly


MOSCOW 1961
GARDEN RING
YERMOLAEVSKIY PEREULOK
Patriarch's Pond
US Embassy
Moscow River
ARBAT DISTRICT
Spaso House
0 Miles .5 1
0 Kilometers .5 1
GARDEN RING
BOLSHAYA PIROGOVSKAYA
to Novodevichy Convent
and Novodevichy Cemetery
© 2017 Jeffrey L. Ward


GARDEN RING
GORKY STREET
Bolshoi
Lubyanka Square
Metropol Hotel
National Hotel
GUM
Red Square
Kremlin
Moscow River
Novodevichy Convent
BOLSHAYA PIROGOVSKAYA
Cemetery
0 Yards
300
0 Meters
300
NOVODEVICHY CONVENT AND CEMETERY

1

MOSCOW, 1961

IT WAS STILL LIGHT when they landed at Vnukovo, the late northern light that in another month would last until midnight. There had been clouds over Poland but then just patches so you could see the endless flat country below, where the German tanks had rolled in, all the way to the outskirts of Moscow, nothing to stop them, the old fear come true, the landscape of paranoia. Even from the air it looked scrubby and neglected, dirt tracks and poor farmhouses, then factories belching brown lignite smoke. But what had he expected? White birch forests, troika races over the snow? It was the wrong season, the wrong century.

There was no seat belt sign. Simon felt the descent, then the bump and skid of wheels on the runway, and looked out the window. Any airport–a terminal and a tower, some outlying buildings, no signs.

"Sheremetyevo?" he asked his–what? handler? A human visa, someone the Russians had sent to Frankfurt to travel with him.

"No, Vnukovo. VIP airport," he said, evidently meaning to impress.

But in the fading light it seemed dreary, empty runways with clumps of grass running along the edges, a lone signalman in overalls waving them away from the main terminal. They taxied to one of the other buildings.

"No customs," his handler said, part of the VIP service.

Simon peered out, his face pressed against the plastic window. What would he look like now? Twelve years. In the one picture Simon had seen, the one the wire services had picked up and sent around the world, he'd been wearing a Russian fur hat, flaps up, and a double-breasted coat, the onion domes of St. Basil's just over his shoulder, the kind of picture authors used on book jackets. But now it was spring, no heavy clothes to hide behind. He'd be Frank. If he was there. So far nobody, just the empty tarmac, away from the bother of customs. It occurred to Simon then that they didn't want anyone to know he'd come, shuttling him off to an out building, whisking him away in some dark car like an exchanged prisoner, as if he'd been the spy, not Frank. Maybe they'd anticipated reporters and flashbulbs, the foreign press still fascinated by Frank. The man who betrayed a generation. Twelve years, a lifetime, ago. But nobody had told them. This end of the runway was empty, just two airport workers wheeling a staircase up to the plane. Someone was coming out of the building now, heading toward them, a soldier's rigid shoulders. Not Frank.

Simon put on his coat and headed for the door, his handler following with the luggage. How could Frank not come to the airport? His brother. And now his publisher, the one Frank had asked for, arranging the visa to come work on the memoirs, an excuse to see him, maybe even explain things, all these years later. Things you couldn't say in a book, not one that would have to pass his bosses' vetting. Line by line in some office at the Lubyanka. Well, but hadn't we done the same thing? Pete DiAngelis in the small conference room, making notes.

"We have to be sure our people aren't compromised," DiAngelis had said. "You understand." His tone suggesting that Simon didn't, that he was some kind of traitor himself, aiding and abetting. An opportunist too greedy to realize what was at stake.

"He doesn't mention any agents by name. Not active ones. He's not trying to give anyone away."

"No? That didn't stop him before. He write about that? The people he set up? The ones who didn't come back?"

"See for yourself," he said, gesturing to the manuscript. "It's about him. Why he did it."

"Why did he?" DiAngelis said, goading.

Simon shrugged. "He believed in it. Communism."

"Believed in it. And now he's going to say he's sorry? Except he's not. *My Secret Life*. Here's my side. And screw you. For two cents I'd shut the whole thing down. Who gives a fuck what he believes?"

"People. Let's hope so anyway."

"Or you're out some cash, huh?" He looked straight at Simon. "Paying him. Making him rich. For fucking us over. Freedom of the press."

Simon nodded at him, a silent "as you say."

"Don't think anybody's happy about this. He wants to make the Agency look bad, all right. Who the fuck would believe him anyway? But if he names any of our guys, even hints–"

"We take it out. You think I'd want to endanger anyone in the field?"

"I don't know what you'd want."

"There's nothing like that in there. Read it. The other side already has, don't you think? So now it's your turn. Just leave something for the rest of us, okay?"

Another look. "One thing. Satisfy my curiosity. How'd you twist the Agency's arm? Get them to go along with this?"

"Are they going along? I thought that's what you were here for. Throw red flags all over the field."

In fact, it was *Look* whose involvement had given the Agency the needed push, the promise of publicity, even a court fight, if they tried to stop publication. The *Digest*, the *Post*, wouldn't even look at an excerpt, and though Luce was tempted, sensing a story big enough for a special issue, he finally fell back on principle too ("we don't publish Communist spies"), which left *Look* and the serial sale that made the deal happen. Without that, Simon never could have raised the money the Russians were asking. More than M. Keating & Sons had paid for anything, a pile of chips all shoved now on red, for what had to be a best seller. Diana's father, a Keating son, had reservations, but in the end went along with Simon. What choice did he have? After Frank's defection, Simon had had to resign from the State Department, and it was Keating who'd come to the rescue, offering him a career in publishing. Now Simon was running the company, Keating just a genial presence at the Christmas party. Too late now to change succession plans.

"You realize this is a first draft?" Simon said to DiAngelis. "You're just going to have to go through it again when I get back. So leave something."

"There's more? You want him to put stuff in?"

"I want to know what he did. Actually did. Besides defect. That's all anybody knows really. That he–"

"Ran," DiAngelis finished. He looked at Simon. "You want him to be innocent. He wasn't."

"No," Simon said. "He wasn't."

But he had been once. You could see it in the old home movies, the boys like colts trying to stand on wobbly legs, making faces at the camera. In the end Simon became the taller, but when they were boys it was Frank who had the crucial extra inch, just as he had the extra year. The films, jerky and grainy, showed them opening

Christmas presents, dodging waves at the beach, waving down from the tree at their grandmother's house, and in all of them Simon was trailing after Frank, a kind of shadow, his partner in crime. Frank knew things. Where to find clams in the mud flats. How to get extra hot fudge sauce at Bailey's. How to skim their father's pocket change without his knowing or missing it. Years of this, in the old house on Mt. Vernon Street, bedrooms separated by a narrow hall, the model train running between, so that it really seemed like one room.

It was their mother who decided to separate them. Frank was sent to St. Mark's, a Weeks tradition, but the following year, Simon's turn, his mother decided on Milton instead.

"It'll be good for you, to be on your own. Think for yourself. Instead of listening to your brother all the time."

"I don't listen to him all the time."

"A lot of the time then."

Frank tried to be reassuring. "You're the smart one. She wants you to concentrate on your studies."

"You're smart."

"Not the way you are. Anyway, the headmaster's a friend of Aunt Ruth, that's how they know about the school, so he'll be nice. Always good to have the top guy on your side."

"Maybe she'll change her mind."

But Emily Weeks wasn't in the habit of changing her mind, and the separation was permanent. She had been right—Simon thrived on his own—but years later he still felt the loss, like some finger that had been snipped off in an accident and never replaced. During the holidays it seemed almost the same, talking late into the night up on the third floor, the Weeks boys again. But inevitably they grew apart. They had never resembled each other—except for the Weeks jaw—but now, unexpectedly, even their voices began to differ, Frank's a rich baritone with a boarding school drawl, Simon still Mt. Vernon Street.

Then they were together again at college. School was one thing, but Weekses went to Harvard.

"All this Weeks business," Frank said. "Weekses do this, Weekses do that."

"Well, Pa's like that."

"And getting worse. I thought, when he went to Washington–but no, now he's back, it just gets smaller and smaller."

"What does?"

"His world. You realize he can walk everywhere he goes? That's how small it is. The office on State Street, the Athenaeum, the Somerset Club. He never has to drive. His whole world is in walking distance. Like a native or something."

"There's the Symphony," Simon said.

"And he walks there. My point."

Once a week on matinee day, as he had for years, up Commonwealth and back on Marlborough, a full-length wool cape against the cold, a walk so fixed it had become a Boston sight, like the swan boats.

For a while it seemed they were closer than ever. Frank enjoyed showing him the ropes–which lecture course to avoid, which seminar virtually guaranteed you an A, where to get your hair cut. And Simon absorbed it all–the right book, the right portion of gin, everything but Frank's effortless ease. There were parties in Frank's large suite in Eliot House, facing the boathouse, everything Simon had always imagined Cambridge would be. But that was the year things turned political, Frank loitering around the edges, then taking his first steps. At first just small statements of class rebellion–a refusal to join the Porcellian after they'd punched him, a disdain, usually comic, for the parties his roommates still gave, and almost inevitably, the prickly dinner arguments with his father. Francis Weeks had served in the Treasury, a reluctant New Dealer, and he was concerned about the fascist threat overseas and social justice at home,

but it simply wasn't in him to walk a picket line or demonstrate in rallies, both of which Frank now did, provoking more arguments. Simon watched from the sidelines, ready to take Frank's side but dismayed to see his father looking suddenly older, wounded and puzzled, his safe, small world upended. It'll pass, his mother said.

And then, in the summer before his last year, Frank volunteered for Spain, surprising everyone and making Simon feel left behind, conventional and cautious while Frank went out to slay dragons.

"How can he not finish his degree?" his father said. "Thank God you have more sense."

"He's right, though. To go. The fascists–"

"Oh, right. Watch he doesn't get himself killed. You can't get righter than that."

"Francis," Emily said.

"I know, I know. But it's not a game. What's Spain to him anyway?"

"It's not just Spain. They're using it as an exercise. A warm-up. If we don't stop them there–"

"We're not going to stop them there. Whatever Frank thinks. He'll get himself killed for nothing." No longer blustering, his voice suddenly breaking.

But he didn't get killed. Instead he took a bullet in the shoulder and managed to survive sepsis in the field hospital, which took him out of the war and out of politics, cynical now about both sides, embarrassed to have ever been naïve enough to think that Communists, anybody, could claim the moral high ground. He became, predictably, his parents, but not quite–Spain had left some itch for adventure. He finished his degree, played at law school, floundering, at loose ends until the war finally gave him what he was looking for. The army wouldn't take him with his shoulder, but Francis knew Donovan and it was arranged–the night train to DC, a job at the OSS. The first thing he did was recruit Simon as an intelligence ana-

lyst, pushing paper on Navy Hill while Frank practiced parachute drops in the Maryland countryside. But they were together, Washington another Cambridge, their oyster.

When the war ended, and the OSS with it, Simon moved with the other analysts to State, probably where he should have been all along. Frank hung on in the War Department, convinced Truman would have to replace Donovan's group with a new agency. His guess was right. The following year he landed at the Central Intelligence Group, Office of Policy Coordination, a euphemism for overseas ops, and their Washington life went on as before, official meetings and unofficial lunches at Harvey's, nights on the town, double dating. A special joint committee with the Brits to liaise with Baltic refugee groups and Ukrainian nationalists, Simon representing State and Frank the OPC, the heady pleasure of being in on things, part of something important, on their way.

And then, like a screech of tires, the headlines appeared one morning and everything stopped. Frank was gone. Just two steps ahead of Hoover, two steps ahead of treason. The Soviets' most successful agent, gossiping over lunch, picking Simon's brain, not just a leak at State, a spigot Frank could turn whenever he liked. Smiling, just as he had in the home movies. "You're the smart one." But not about Frank.

At the bottom of the stairs the military Russian introduced himself as Colonel Vassilchikov and with a quick nod dismissed the handler. Simon turned to say good-bye, then realized he didn't know his name, had never known it or forgotten, already failing DiAngelis's instructions: "Remember everything. Don't write it down, remember it. Everything. Even if you think it's nothing. Keep your eyes open."

Already failing. A name he should have remembered. A black car he should have seen, just over the colonel's shoulder–had it always been there? But in the curious half-light nothing seemed to

have definition, the whole country somehow out of focus, behind a scrim.

"It is your first time in Moscow?" the colonel was saying, a standard courtesy, now oddly surreal. Did they see many repeat visitors, here on the moon?

"Yes, my first. That's all right–I'll keep that." His briefcase, the colonel reaching out for it.

"Contraband?" the colonel said smiling, an unexpected joke.

"The manuscript. Frank's book."

"There are other copies, you know."

"Not with my notes."

"Ah. I will be curious to see that," the colonel said, an insider, part of the editorial process. "What the CIA objects to."

"They're my notes."

"They'd better be." Another voice, behind the colonel, stepping out of the car. "The Simon touch." A laugh in the voice now. "That's what we're paying for."

Simon stared. The hair was receding, but not gone. The face tighter, lines spreading out from his eyes, lived in. But voices never change, the same flip intimacy that drew everybody in, and for a second the face matched the voice, lines smoothing out, the way he'd looked before, before all the lies.

"Simple Simon," Frank said, the old teasing name, his eyes suddenly soft.

Simon stood still. Simple Simon. As if nothing had happened. What did they do now? Shake hands?

"Frank," he said, light-headed. The same crinkly smile, someone who'd just been away for the weekend.

Frank nodded. "It's me," he said, as if he were reading Simon's mind.

"Frank–"

And suddenly there were arms around him, chest pressed against

his, wrapping him in the past. Frank. Then he was being held by the shoulders, inspected. Frank tipped his head toward his glasses.

"Specs? Since when? Or are they just to make people think you read the books you put out?" He glanced at Simon's clothes. "You're dressing better. Hart Schaffner?"

Simon looked down at his suit, as if he'd just noticed he was wearing it. "Altman's."

"Altman's. And for only a few dollars more– Just like Pa." He dropped his hands. "You've met Boris Borisevich? Boris Jr., literally. I call him that sometimes, don't I, Boris?"

The colonel nodded, smiling, apparently a joke between them.

"Anything you need, he's your man. Driver. Tickets to the Bolshoi. Anything. He likes pulling rabbits out of his hat."

Simon looked at him, disconcerted. The KGB as concierge.

"Of course he's really here to protect me. In the beginning, you know, we couldn't be sure–if the Agency might try something. I told them that really wasn't much in our line. But of course it is in their line, so naturally they'd think– Anyway, that was then. Now I just go about my business. But always nice to know somebody's got your back. Right, Boris? Here we go," he said, starting to get in the car, then turning, putting his hand on Simon's shoulder again. "It's good to see you. I never thought–" He paused. "Look at you. Gray." He touched Simon's temple. "And here I am writing memoirs. So when did that happen, all the years?"

Colonel Vassilchikov put the luggage in the trunk then sat up front with the driver, leaving Frank and Simon together in the back.

"In the beginning," Frank picked up again, wanting to talk, "before we knew we didn't have to worry, the Service gave us new names. Maclean was Fraser. Like that. No addresses, of course. No *Time* correspondent turning up out of the blue for a drink. That wasn't too hard. There's no telephone book in Moscow and nobody to tell them where I was. So in a way, I wasn't really here."

"Now you're Weeks again?"

"Mm. Whereabouts still unknown. I assume the Agency doesn't know where the flat is or I'd have spotted someone lurking."

Actually thinking they'd tail him now, twelve years later, a footnote to history.

"Like him?" Simon said, nodding to Vassilchikov up front.

"He doesn't lurk. He comes right in."

"He lives with you?"

"He visits."

"You know we've promised *Look* pictures. They'll want you in the flat. At home. How you live. All that. Is that going to be a problem?"

"No. In for a penny. My cover's blown now anyway. About time, I suppose."

"Blown how?"

"Well, you'll have to tell them. When they debrief you. You supposed to make a note or just keep it up here?" He put a finger to his temple.

Simon said nothing.

"Yermolaevskiy Pereulok. 21. You can write it down later. Very comfortable. My own study. Well, you'll see." He made a signal to the driver to start. "I got them to put you up at the National. They had you down for the Ukraina and I said no no, too far away from the flat. And the rooms aren't much to write home about. One of Stalin's wedding cakes. Not as bad as the Pekin, but still."

"What's wrong with the Pekin?" Simon said, playing along.

Frank smiled, enjoying himself. "Well, they built it for us, the Service. New offices. But that didn't work out for some reason. So, a hotel. Except the rooms can be a little–odd. Red light, green light over the door. To call a maid, they say now. But they were built as interrogation rooms. You know, red if someone was still being interrogated." He stopped, catching Simon's expression. "Anyway, the Chinese don't seem to mind. Very popular with delegations. Not a

bad restaurant either. If you're in the mood for Chinese. We can go one night if you like."

"I'm not here that long."

"A week anyway. At least. And you have to come out to the dacha. Joanna's looking forward to it."

"Jo," Simon said quietly, another thing he seemed to have forgotten. Once all he thought about. "How is she?"

"A little under the weather. She wanted to come tonight, but I said you'd be there bright and early, no need to rush things. I think she's a little–nervous. Seeing someone from the States. What you'll think. You're the first. From before."

"But she likes it?" Somebody who'd been to El Morocco, her long hair swinging behind her when she danced. White shoulders, a broad lipstick smile. Don't be so serious, she'd say, pulling him onto the dance floor, anyone can do it. Not like her.

"Well, like. She doesn't *like* anything really, since Richie died," he said, almost mumbling, as if the words were being pulled out of him. "It's been hard for her."

"I'm sorry. I should have said first thing–"

Frank dismissed this. "It's all right. It's a while ago now. You think it'll never get better, but it does. Even something like this."

"He was sick?"

"Meningitis. There wasn't anything anybody could do. The best care. The hospital in Pekhotnaya." He looked over. "It's the Service hospital. The best care."

"The Service hospital. The KGB has its own hospital?"

Frank nodded. "I know what you're thinking. Maybe you're right. But when it's you–your son–who needs the privilege, you're grateful. You have to understand how things are here. All that," he said, waving his hand at the window, "you have to imagine what it's going to be. How far we've come. But the Service was always some-

thing–apart. Professional. Out there you wonder sometimes, does anything work? But inside, in the Service, everything works."

"You don't write about it. Richie. In the book. Or Jo. You never mention her."

"No. It's my life in the Service, how I managed to do it, play against the house. Jo's not part of that. She never knew." He looked at Simon. "It's not a soap opera. You haven't come to make it one, have you? Because I'm not going to write that."

"She never knew? But she came?"

"I didn't force her," Frank said simply. "It was her decision. But it's understood about the book? She's entitled to her privacy." He looked up at Simon. "I don't want to upset her. Not now."

"All right," Simon said, retreating.

"Anyway, there'll be plenty of other things to work on," Frank said, abruptly cheerful, switching gears. "Like old times. You whipping my papers into shape. What was the one we did for old Whiting? I left it to the last minute and–"

"The British Navy. In the seventeenth century."

"Your memory. The British Navy. A whole semester. On old boats." He shook his head. "Whiting. You had to have three people sign up or the course was canceled, so I figured he couldn't afford to lose anybody. All you had to do was show up. And then he got serious about it, wanting papers. Ass. But we pulled it off. Well, you did. So now this." He indicated Simon's bag. "You made notes?"

"Lots."

Frank smiled. "That bad?"

"No, just incomplete."

"You understand, some things can't be said. People still active. I'm not trying to get even with anybody. "

"Except Hoover."

"Well, Hoover has it coming. He hasn't done a damn thing

since he was swinging his hatchet at whiskey barrels. Just stamp his feet to see how fast people run away. And some blackmail on the side. You think I'm too hard on him? I just say what happened. What I knew personally. Why? He threaten you?"

"Not yet. He hasn't seen it yet."

"You think so? Then he's more incompetent than I thought. Anyway Pirie and the boys at the Agency will love it. They'll back you up."

"I'm not exactly popular there either. They think you want to make them look bad. Keystone Kops."

"Is that what you think I want?"

Simon looked at him. "I don't know. What do they want? Your people?"

"The Service?"

"They never talk. Never admit to anything. And now we've got Public Enemy No. 1 going on about the high old times he had in the war and how he fooled everybody, Hoover and Pirie and–"

"And?"

"Me."

"You're not in the book," Frank said quietly.

"And the Brits. And State. Why leave anybody out? But why say anything in the first place, if you're an organization that never says anything at all?"

"Why do you think?"

"I think they want to embarrass us. Maybe stir up a little inter-agency rivalry. That's always worth doing. Make trouble. And now I'm part of it. Helping you do it. Again."

"Jimbo." Simon James, another nickname, another hook from the past.

Simon turned and looked out the window. Nearly dark now, the beginning of the city, concrete apartment blocks and warehouses, an occasional church with onion domes. Anywhere. But not anywhere.

Not even Europe. Signs in Cyrillic. Everything in shadow, enemy territory.

"I never got much out of you, you know. If that's what's bothering you. The republic wasn't in any danger because of you."

"The republic didn't think so. I got the heave-ho."

"Yes, well, I'm sorry about that. You never know how people are going to react. Overreact."

Simon looked at him, speechless.

"Anyway, this suits you better. A book man. Very distinguished. And now it turns out, just what the doctor ordered. A book like this needs—a certain amount of respectability. Which is one thing you can say for Keating. Just the place if you're bringing a little notoriety to the party. Do they really think I'm that? Public Enemy No. 1? Like Dillinger?" Amused, or pretending to be amused.

"They used to. What did you think you were?"

"A soldier. That's all I ever was. I was proud to be in the Service. I still am. An officer now. You understand that, don't you? You must have seen that when you signed on for this. It's not a mea culpa."

"No, it's a 'see what a clever boy I am.' Is that how you pitched it to—the Service. Get them to okay it?"

"You've got it the wrong way around. It wasn't my idea. It was theirs. I'm still not sure they were right. But they were looking for *aktivnyye meropriyatiya*," he said, his whole voice changing with the language, suddenly a Russian.

Simon glanced up front. But Vassilchikov hadn't moved, just stared placidly out the window. Listening to both, English and Russian the same, so unobtrusive that after a while you forgot he was there, a human tape recorder, spools circling in his head.

"Active measures," Frank translated. "Something to show people how effective we can be. I had a pretty good run, you know. Nobody had a clue—Donovan, Pirie, any of them. If Malenko hadn't defected and brought his little CARE package of names with him, I

might still be there. Who knows? I'm a hero in the Service. So why not tell my story?"

"Parts of it."

"Well, yes. And I suppose nobody's saying no to a little collateral damage. Some friction with MI6. Give Hoover's blood pressure a nudge. All that. But that wasn't the reason. It's an active measure. To show the Service–in a good light."

"Like a recruiting poster."

Frank shook his head. "These old stories? A lot of water over the dam since I was leading Pirie around in circles. Different world now. Not so many idealists these days. People here still want to be in the Service. It's a good job. But in the West– Now you have to buy them. They never had to pay me a dime. Any of us." He smiled. "Maybe that's why they think it was a golden age. We did it for nothing. Because it was the right thing to do."

"All of it?"

"I thought so. At the time." He paused. "Jimbo, if you're having cold feet about this, just say. It's not some piece of disinformation. The Service doesn't need to make things up. It's all true."

"But you need Keating to make it respectable."

"That's right." He looked over at Simon. "I want you to make me look good again. An A from Whiting. A B, anyway." He looked down. "And maybe I thought it was a little payback too. For all the trouble I caused you. The book's going to sell–that's what everybody tells me. So why not sell for you? Last year's figures–you could use the cash. Keating, I mean."

"How do you know?"

"Jimbo."

"You looked at our books?"

"Not me personally, no." He took out a cigarette and tapped Vassilchikov on the shoulder for a light. "So I thought, good for you, good for me."

"You could have got more money from someone else."

Frank waved this away with the smoke. "I don't need the money. I get eight hundred a month. That doesn't mean anything to you, but it's a generous pension here. I have everything I need. Anyway, *Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga* takes 70 percent, so how much more could there be?"

"Who?"

"The agency your people dealt with. That sells the book abroad."

"70 percent?"

Frank smiled. "The Soviets are very good capitalists when foreign currency's involved." He lowered his voice, serious again. "It's not the money. I trust you. I don't want this to be something for the tabloids. It's my life. I want to explain what I did. So it makes sense to people. To you. Maybe even to Pa."

Simon was quiet for a minute. "Have you been in touch?"

Frank shook his head. "I thought he'd write when Mother died. But he didn't." He paused. "How is he?"

"He still goes to the office."

"And the Symphony?"

"No. He doesn't go out much. You remember once you said his world was small? Now it's smaller. He dropped the Somerset."

"Because of me?"

Simon said nothing.

"Rotten food anyway." He looked away. "I'll bet nobody had to say a word. Just look. Christ. Boston." He drew on the cigarette. "I suppose you get the house now."

"I don't know."

"Well, he's not going to leave it to me. A little impractical under the circumstances."

"What would I do with it?"

"Live in it. No one else has ever lived there. Just Weekses. So now, you."

"I'm in New York, Frank." He looked at him. "I thought you hated the house."

"I hated what it stood for. The house– It's funny the things you remember. That leather pig by the fireplace. Nobody even knew whose it was originally, how it got there. The whole place was like that. Things nobody could explain. They'd just always been there." His voice trailed off. "I hate him thinking he's the last. It must kill him, to think that." He paused. "Does he ever talk about it? What happened."

"No."

"No, he wouldn't. He has the PO number here. I thought he might–but he never has. Mother did. Before she died. A good-bye letter, but she didn't say it–not a word about the cancer–so I didn't know. She said she never thought she'd be writing to a box number. There was a five-dollar bill for Richie. That's the last I heard."

Simon turned to the window again. Dark now, an occasional window light from the side of the road. "What a fucking mess," he said quietly.

"What?"

"All of it."

Frank was quiet for a minute. "I don't see it that way," he said finally. "Spain was a mess. The war was a mess. Pirie sending those Latvians in on some cockamamie suicide mission, that was a mess. I think things are getting better. I think we're building something here. And I helped." He turned. "I'm not asking you to agree with me. Just let the book speak for itself. That's all. Fair enough?" Closing the sale, everything but a handshake. "Here, try one of these," he said, offering the cigarette pack.

Simon inhaled. Russian smoke, so rough it clawed at his throat.

"It wasn't a suicide mission. Someone betrayed them. As long as we're telling the truth."

Frank looked at him. "Not all of it. Then we'd have to say

what they were planning to do. An assassination was involved, as I recall. Reprisal. In hopes that would lead to more trouble. All the old grudges. 'Destabilize' was the word Pirie used, wasn't it? But we knew what it meant. More people killed. Luckily they didn't get to start anything. Somebody stopped them."

"Somebody might have stopped them sooner. Before they left. Since the op was doomed anyway."

"Somebody might have. But that would have been revealing, wouldn't it? And who's to say they wouldn't have tried again? Not exactly angels, that bunch." He rubbed out his cigarette. "Look, you don't really want to pick at old scabs, do you? We had no business sending those goons in. What the hell did Pirie think was going to happen? An uprising? Pick up your pitchforks and march on Riga? This wasn't some client state. It was the Soviet Union. Russian soil. And we were sending in armed fighters."

"Who didn't think it was Russian soil. Who thought it was their country."

"Their country," Frank said. "So take on the Soviets. With us cheerleading in the background. Not to mention supplying the guns. You really want me to put this in the book? Hard to say who comes out worse. Pirie and his merry band of invaders or me, doing my job."

Simon said nothing for a minute. "I think it's important for the reader to know what you did. It wasn't just passing papers. Who said what at a meeting. It wasn't harmless. People got hurt. The reader wants to know how you felt about that."

Frank turned to him. "You mean you do."

"All right. I do."

"Which version would you prefer? How all this dirty business tied me up in knots? All those sleepless nights? Or the truth? I never gave it a second thought. What were the Latvians thinking? What were *we* thinking to let them think it? They wanted to make war. The Soviets had a right to defend themselves. All pretty clear-cut,

as far as I could see. No trouble sleeping. Not over them." He took out another cigarette and toyed with it. "Still, I don't know that one actually wants to say that. In a book. Hard to get the tone right." He paused. "Christ. You're only here an hour and we're already doing this. Let's not fight. Tonight, I just wanted–to see you. Catch up."

"Like alums. A reunion."

"That's right. How's business?" A mock slap on the back in his voice. "How's the wife and kids?"

"Well, you know about the business. You've seen the books."

"They were just protecting their interests," Frank said, a little embarrassed.

"Did they actually break into the office to do it?"

"I wouldn't know," Frank said. "Let's hope things pick up next year. With *My Secret Life*. You like the title, by the way? You never said."

"I just got here."

"It doesn't feel that way, though. It feels like old times."

Simon looked at him. The easy grin, like turning on a light.

"Anyway, how *are* the wife and kids?"

"Diana's fine. No kids. She didn't want them." Just lovers, the ones Simon wasn't supposed to know about.

"I have to say, I'm surprised. That you're still together. You don't mind my saying that?"

"You've said it. Why surprised?"

"I never thought she was your type, that's all. But obviously I was wrong. Not the first time," he said, a kind of apology for the argument before. "And lucky for me. The boss's daughter. Just when I need you there. Making me respectable. Unless that's just a front. Is that it? Still working for Don Pirie?"

"I never worked for Pirie. You did."

"So I did. And he survived it. Well, shit always floats to the top. I have to say, the fact that he's head of section is one of the few

things that gives me comfort in my old age. The Main Adversary doesn't seem as threatening with old Don in charge."

"The main adversary?"

"What we call the States. Sort of code name."

"Do you miss it?" Suddenly intimate.

"I don't think about that. What would be the point? I didn't buy a round-trip ticket. We're here." The words almost wistful, hanging in the air.

Simon said nothing, staring at him.

"And Moscow's a fascinating city. Lots of nooks and crannies. You have to see some of it while you're here. If I know the Service, they've booked you a Kremlin view, so that's a start." The concierge Service again. "And you know we travel, so I get around a fair amount."

"Travel where?"

"Black Sea. Budapest. Dresden last year. Anywhere I like, really. In the socialist bloc."

Simon nodded to Vassilchikov. "Does he go with you?"

"Once, to the Crimea. That was back when we thought someone might try to take a potshot at me. Now it's usually just a local. To liaise. Help me with things."

"How does Jo feel about this? Having someone around all the time?"

"Well, it's not all the time." He looked away. "She doesn't always go. She prefers the dacha."

"That doesn't sound like her."

"No," Frank said. "Well, we change over the years."

But he hadn't. Simon watched him brush back the hair on the side of his head, a gesture so familiar that for a second you could believe he hadn't changed at all. Still Frank. Whoever that had been.

"Why didn't she want kids?" Frank said, a stray afterthought.

"She did. We couldn't have them. So she said that." Something he hadn't told anyone, not even his secret to keep.

"Not your fault, I hope."

"No." A botched operation neither of them talked about, not sure whose child it might have been.

"That must have been a relief. Remember when Ray had to go through all that? Sperm counts. God, how embarrassing. Beating off in a cup."

"What's the difference? Nobody's watching."

"Then you hand it to a nurse." He shuddered, playing. "And she's looking right at you. Ray told me." Another face, genuinely squeamish.

Simon smiled. "He look back?"

"What? Oh, at the nurse. Well, Ray. Not exactly Mr. Sensitive. He probably asked her out. Here." He held out an invisible cup. "Like it was roses. Something she'd go for." Both of them smiling now, Ray an old joke between them, the car easy again, no more scratchiness in the air. "Whatever happened to him anyway? Do you know?"

"Last I heard he was still at Bill's law firm. Trusts."

"Trusts. A guy who parachutes into France and makes it back. Funny how things turn out."

Simon looked at him, but Frank had moved on.

"That's the Kremlin. Almost there."

They were coming down a sweeping broad street, eight lanes, Simon guessed, curiously empty of cars, just a few black shapes gliding by. At the bottom an open square and behind it the familiar fortress walls and gate towers, each tower topped by a glowing red star.

"Gorky Street," Frank said, pointing to the road outside. "Stalin had it widened and then put these up." He motioned toward the huge apartment buildings, Russian neoclassical, sober as banks. "Everybody wanted to live here then. You know, Moscow's still medieval that way—people want to be close to the castle, to the center. Here we are."

The car had turned the corner and stopped in front of another

neoclassical building, this one with doormen and sculpted nymphs and light pouring out from the lobby. "Lenin stayed here. So you're in good company. Don't bother. They'll get the bags." He held the car door, waiting.

Simon got out and looked around. Moscow. The airport had been nowhere. But this was Russia–the shadowy streets, the heavy stone laced with Soviet gothic, policemen in greatcoats on the corner, people glancing sideways at his foreign clothes. The Moscow he'd seen in movies, gray with menace. A car pulling up, men jumping out, taking him away. Hadn't it actually happened? Hundreds of times. Interrogated in a room with a red light over the door. On his own, not even an alphabet. Except he wasn't alone. He looked over at Frank. A man who'd betrayed everyone and now seemed a kind of lifesaver, something you could hang on to until the rescue boat arrived.

"Recognize the car?" Frank said.

"What?"

"The Zim." He nodded to the airport car. "It's a Buick. Same model anyway. They copied it. Something to make you feel right at home."

In the lobby there were oversized Grecian statues and a grand carpeted staircase that seemed to rise two stories to Art Nouveau windows. After the quiet street, the lobby seemed bustling, groups of men in bulky suits huddling like delegates, presumably plant managers from Rostov or Party officials from one of the Eastern Bloc countries, excited to be here, at the center, a little dazed by the luxury. He could see a few women in the restaurant, but only a few. More men in suits, box-shaped with loose sleeves. While Vassilchikov checked him in at the desk, Frank steered them to the bar, a tsarist fantasy of red flocked walls and velvet cushions, now worn, some of the threads showing, the air thick with stale cigar smoke.

"Well, as I live and breathe. I thought you *never* went out." An English voice, drawing room theatrical and loud.

Frank turned, ambushed. "Gareth."

"We've just been to the Bolshy and thought we'd stop by for a nightcap. Join us? You remember Sergei?" He turned slightly to include a man, at least twenty years younger, who nodded, awkward. "Sergei hates the ballet, but he indulges me. Of course, I indulge him too. Don't I? See the new jumper?" Feeling the sleeve of Sergei's sweater. "Won't go near a proper suit, so I have to do the best I can to make him look decent. Not easy. But of course worth it," he said, looking at the boy, "when you're so good-looking."

Gareth's suit, an old pinstripe with a handkerchief flowering out of the pocket, needed pressing. In fact everything about him seemed disheveled, his tie knot pulled away from his throat, cigarette ash spilling on his cuffs, an alcohol sheen in his eyes. Simon looked at him for another minute before he finally recognized him, the once wolfish face now softened with flesh.

"Gareth Jones," he said, blurting it.

Gareth tipped his head. "*Dans son corps.* Or what's left of it. But how nice. I thought no one had the faintest anymore. All these years."

Ten of them by now, caught in the undertow of Burgess and Maclean, another defector for the newsreels. Staring at Simon, curious, like the people in the street.

"And you are? Or shouldn't I ask? It's one of the things about this place—nobody introduces anybody." He looked at Frank, waiting.

"Simon Weeks," Frank said. "My brother."

"Your brother?" he said, almost a squeal. "You'd never know it. Well, if you look," he said, peering at Simon. "The jawline. And a little around the eyes. So you've come to see the sights? Or just this old non grata?" He poked Frank's chest. "Or something else?" This to Simon, almost taunting.

"Just Frank. And the sights."

"Such as they are. Of course, there's the body," he said, giving the word two syllables. "Macabre, if you ask me, but it's really

remarkable what they do for him. Old Lenin. He looks better than I do."

Sergei laughed, then looked down.

"So disloyal," Gareth said to him, then turned back to Simon. "Of course you have to wait hours. Hordes, every day. But maybe Frank can jump the queue for you. Join us?"

"Can't," Frank said.

"Well, then we'll just have to chat like this," Gareth said, needling him. "Everybody wondering." He turned to Simon. "I didn't even know he had a brother. My God, what was he *like*?"

"The same," Simon said, smiling a little at Frank. And wasn't he? "People don't change."

"They do here. I wish I had your mirror. It ages you, this place. The cold. Nobody to see. The Russians won't talk to you—why take the risk?—and people who should see each other," he said, looking at Frank, "who have things in common, you would think—but they don't much either. It's a very stick-to-yourself town. At least for people like us. But there's the Bolshy, that's always wonderful. And friends." He turned to Sergei, touching him. "How do people live without friends? What else is there really? Well, I suppose if you won't join us we'd better push on. Maybe next time. Of course, there never is. Donald's just the same. Try to be friendly and you get a chill straight off the steppes." He made a brrr gesture. "Thank God for Guy. He's always up for anything. But then always making scenes. So you wonder if it's worth it. Nice to have met you," he said to Simon. "The Tretyakov Gallery's the thing to see. The icons. And tell this one not to make himself scarce. We should see more of each other, you know. We're all in the same boat."

"We're not in the same boat," Frank said, annoyed.

Gareth took a step back, as if he'd been struck. "Well, have it your way. He thinks he's one of them. The gendarmerie. But really we're just agents who've outlived our usefulness. That's how they

see us. So we just *molder*." He glanced toward the bar. "And take our pleasure where we may." He turned, then spotted Colonel Vassilchikov heading toward them. "Oh. The sheriff," he said, his shoulders rising out of their slouch. "And not the gentle soul you think he'll be. Not at all nice to friends. Come on. Let's vamoose."

Sergei just stared at him, confused.

"The bar," Gareth said, taking his elbow.

Vassilchikov joined them, speaking Russian, his eyes following Gareth. Frank answered him in Russian, then turned to Simon.

"The room's ready. We can go up."

"What was that?"

"What?"

"The once notorious Gareth Jones."

Frank made a humph sound.

"Scrounging drinks."

"No. He's very well taken care of. The Service has rules about that. Taking care of your own. Otherwise it sends a bad message to the field. People have to know they'll always be taken care of. Brought home, if it comes to that."

Simon looked at him, surprised by the word. Home.

"It's just he's never made any effort. Never even learned the language. Look at Maclean—works for the institute, sends his children to Russian schools. He's made a life here."

"Is it true, though? That the—you know, the ones who've come here—don't see each other? You'd think—"

"Some do, some don't. It's a question of the wives, mostly. They're the ones who get lonely. Jo used to see a fair amount of Melinda, so I saw Donald. That's the way it worked. But Gareth? Why would I want to see Gareth? He was a nasty piece of work, even before. And now—"

"Nasty how?"

"His specialty was blackmail. After he got them into bed, had his fun." He looked away. "It takes all kinds."

Simon glanced toward the bar where Gareth was already tossing back a drink. Even the Service had its pecking order, some treacheries more acceptable than others, like prisoners who looked down on molesters but didn't bat an eye at murder.

"Come on, let's celebrate. I ordered caviar."

"Caviar?"

"Who's better than us?" he said, their grandmother's old line, usually before she clinked a champagne glass. "Besides, it's still cheap here. Not like it used to be, but still– You must be hungry. They never have anything decent on the plane."

He had ordered not just caviar, but a whole spread of food, laid out and waiting for them on a big round table in Simon's room, a suite with the promised Kremlin view. Smoked fish and caviar on ice and beet salad and pickled mushrooms, anchored by a board with black bread and sweet butter.

"*Zakuski*," Frank said, an Intourist guide. "In the old days they'd have a few appetizers put out before dinner to keep the hunger pangs away, but then it kept getting bigger and bigger until it became–" He opened his hand to the table. "*Zakuski*. Of course, most people had nothing. Kasha, if they were lucky. We forget that. Boris, some vodka?"

Colonel Vassilchikov, who had come up with them, opened the bottle and poured out three glasses. The room, like the bar downstairs, had red flocked wallpaper and antique furniture, an exercise in fin de siècle nostalgia, but seemed even more faded and musty, velvet drapes with lace trimming so old and fragile you thought it might come apart in your fingers. Simon looked up at the heavy chandelier, another relic from the tsars. Where DiAngelis had said there'd be microphones.

"Don't bother looking for them–you'd never get them all. Just assume someone's listening. They're all over the place. In the walls. The phone. That'd be easy enough, screw off the mouthpiece and

there it is. But then they know you're looking. And you're not that kind of guy. You're someone—it wouldn't even occur to you, the bugs."

But now, looking up, he couldn't help imagining the listeners, sitting in some windowless room with headphones, recording every sound, the clink of vodka glasses as Boris welcomed him, a toast curiously official and secret at the same time, with no one there to hear it but the ears in the walls.

Frank raised his glass again. "The British Navy. In the seventeenth century." He nodded to Simon, smiling. "To making me look good."

"To making you look good," Simon repeated, hearing himself saying it.

"Here, have something to eat," Frank said, filling a plate, playing host. "Boris, what about you?"

Simon looked over at him. Here for the evening, apparently. A bodyguard who didn't stand outside the door, part of the family.

"I've been thinking," Frank said, handing Simon the plate. "About the Latvians. I can put them in, if you think I should." Shoptalk, directly to Simon, as if Boris weren't there.

"All right," Simon said, not sure where Frank was going.

"I'll have to clear it. The Agency might see it as a provocation. And we want to be careful about that. The line these days is make nice, hands together."

"That'll come as news to them."

Frank smiled. "I didn't say it was true. I just said it was the line." He looked over. "I won't apologize," he said quickly. "But I'll say what happened to them. My part in it. I had to, you know. They never should have—" He took another drink. "Well, water over the dam. So. Round one to you."

"It's not a fight."

"No. But I'll give you this one. Be the bad guy of the piece."

He fingered his glass, tracing a ring. "I'm sorry about–any trouble I caused you. The worst of it, all this business, is having to lie to people. To keep cover. It's nothing personal, you know. Just the way things have to be. Still." He looked up. "It's good to see you."

And suddenly, in a quick second, maybe the drink, it was. Simon felt a rush to his face, the old affection. An involuntary smile, sharing a joke no one else heard.

Frank looked away first. "Boris, caviar? Mustn't let it go to waste. Boris is a great one for caviar. Eat it every day if he could."

Boris said something in Russian. Frank laughed and answered back, a different voice again, as if the language put him in another body. He refilled Simon's glass.

"So did Pirie brief you himself?" he said to Simon.

Without thinking, Simon looked up at the chandelier.

"Don't mind about that–you get used to it. Half the time the tape just ends up on a shelf somewhere."

"And the other half?"

"Does it make a difference? I'm *in* the Service. Anything you tell me, you're telling them. So not Pirie?"

"No."

"Not even a hello? You'd think he'd take a personal interest. After all we've been through. Chip then? It's not a briefing you farm out. You'd want someone who knew me."

"Frank–"

Frank held up his hand. "All right, just asking. It had to be somebody. Or have I just slipped off the raft?"

"Guidelines for the book, that's all. They have to vet it. You know that."

"Mm. Their own special blue penciling. A courageous publisher would have told them to fuck off."

Simon nodded. "But you wanted a respectable one."

Frank looked up; your ad. "So not even a message? Something

cryptic to keep me guessing at night? I thought Don might want to have a little fun."

"No."

Frank made a face, then let it go. "Old Don. He's as crazy as Dulles. But predictable. Lucky for us. Whenever you want to know what they'll do, his section, just figure out the dumbest response and–bingo. Chip was all right, though. A good head on his shoulders. Which I suppose means he was never promoted."

"I don't know. Really. I don't work for the Agency. I never even go to DC anymore. So how would I hear?"

"I just thought you might–be in touch. You and Chip go back–the OSS days, for chrissake."

"I haven't seen him. People–scatter."

"So who do you see?"

"From that world? No one. If you want to talk about old times, I can't be much help. They're your old times, not mine."

Frank looked at him, then walked toward the window. "Well, some are yours too. I like old times. That's what we have now, isn't it?" He was quiet for a second, looking out, then turned. "Anyway, that's all the book is, old times, so one way or another–"

He stopped, jarred by the telephone ringing, something unexpected, his face suddenly wary. He nodded to Boris, now a secretary, who picked up the receiver and started talking in a lowered voice, as if Simon could understand Russian. Then more Russian to Frank.

"What is it?" Simon said.

"Oh, nothing. The battle-axe in the hall. You know, the one who keeps your keys. God knows where they get them. War widows, I suppose." His voice nervous, caught off guard. "Boris will fix it. Whatever it is." A forced easiness now, watching Boris leave, then turning back to the window. "Come look at this. I want to show you something." Distracting them both. "See the building over there? Catty corner. Hotel Moskva."

Simon looked out. An ugly big building hulking over an open square.

"See how the two halves don't match? Story goes they brought two sets of drawings to Stalin, to choose, but he just said yes, fine, and nobody had the guts to say 'which?' so they built them both, one on top of the other. That way nobody got in trouble." Talking just to talk, his mind elsewhere, out in the hall where something had happened.

"Did he ever say which one he liked? Stalin?"

"He didn't know there were two. He thought it was supposed to look like that. That was the joke."

Stalin jokes, whistling in the dark, pretending not to hear the knocking next door, years of it.

"I wonder what–" Frank stopped, his eyes fixed over Simon's shoulders. "Jo," he said, apprehensive.

"The old cow didn't want to let me in. So I had to tell her Boris was Lubyanka. That fixed it. That's all right, isn't it? I mean, it's not a secret–" She looked over. "Simon," she said softly.

"Jo," he said, rooted, not moving. The long Rita Hayworth hair now stopped at the shoulders, brushed back in an I-don't-care way, all of it gray, like one of those doctored pictures that show you what you'll look like old. A pencil skirt a few years out of style, the eyes tired, not as bright, or as ready to laugh. Not just an older version of herself, someone else.

"Simon," she said again, and now he saw her lying on a bed, dark hair spread out behind her, one leg raised, the hotel in Virginia, their one weekend. You never see a woman the same way afterward, knowing the body under the clothes, the way her skin feels. Someone you know, even years later, the look of her the same in your mind. One weekend, sweaty sheets, their secret, eating room service in robes, her throaty laugh, the way she gasped when she came, a whole weekend, just them, no one else. And then she met Frank.

"I thought you weren't feeling well," Frank said.

"I made a leap into health," she said, waving her arm a little. "Actually, a nap. That's all it took. So I thought I'd come. I couldn't wait," she said to Simon. "My God, how nice to see you. It doesn't seem real. Here, I mean."

She came up to him and hugged him, an awkward embrace, Simon not ready for it. Something off, lipstick not quite right, an edge to her voice.

"It's not fair. You look just the same. Except for these," she said, touching his glasses. "Very distinguished. All the better to see us."

"And you," he said, holding her shoulders, studying her face, her eyes moist.

"Liar," she said. "I look like hell. Always the gentleman. Oh, look. *Zakuski*. At this hour. Boris, would you pour me a drink?"

Boris looked over at Frank.

"Another?" Frank said gently. "It's getting late–"

"Are you counting them?" she said, almost snapping at him. "He counts them," she said to Simon, who now heard the slight slurring. "I'm no help. I never count. So he has to do it. Did he tell you that I drink too much? What else did he say? I'll bet he's been 'preparing' you. He does that. I thought I'd better get over here before he poisoned you against me."

"He could never do that." Intending to be light, but betrayed by his voice, like a soft hand on her cheek.

"Oh," she said, rearing back a little, catching it.

"He hasn't said anything," Simon said, covering.

Joanna looked at him, then went over and poured a vodka. "Maybe that's worse. Make me a nonperson. That's a specialty here. Lock me up in the attic. Like Mrs. Rochester."

"Jo–" Frank said.

"*Jane Eyre*," she said. "Not something you'd read. You know, I was an English major." She looked at her glass. "Now I'm just–what-

ever I am." She ran her hand along her blouse, as if she were taking stock. "And I wanted to look nice."

"You look fine."

She laughed. "Don't overdo it. I'm still steady enough to look in a mirror. Later it gets a little blurry, but we probably won't make it to that point. Frank will get me home, won't you, dear? Before I say anything. He worries about that. I don't know why. I mean, we never see anybody. Except the other spies."

"They're not–" Frank started, an involuntary wince.

"No, that's right, not anymore. Former spies. They hate the word. Agents. It's nicer. Not spies. But that's what they were. Busy as bees." She pursed her lips and made a series of whispering sounds, a kind of buzzing. "Spying on everyone. You," she said, nodding to Simon. "He spied on you."

"He didn't get much."

"Oh, is that what he says? In the book?"

"Haven't you read it?"

"No. I don't have to read it. I lived it." She sipped her glass.

"Maybe we should go," Frank said. "It's been a long day for Simon. Boris, would you call for the car?"

"I never thought you'd come. Why did you?"

"It's easier than doing it by mail. Working on the book."

"No, I mean why did you agree to do it? After he spied on you. Do you need the money?"

"So far the money's only going one way," he said, trying to be light, move away from it.

"No. I know you," Joanna said, holding up her glass, a pointing finger. "Something else. I'll bet you were curious. You couldn't wait to see–what a mess we made of everything."

"Joanna–" Frank said.

"I'll bet that's it. What happened to them? After all that? I know I'd be curious. But why come? Isn't it all in the book?"

"Not all of it."

"No. I'll bet. Just the good days. That's what the comrades like." She lowered her glass. "Well, who doesn't? So now you can see for yourself. How we're holding up." She stopped. "I thought you'd never want to see him again. But here you are. What did he say about you? In the book. That must have been strange–seeing the truth. Finally."

"I'm not in the book."

"No? Well, you're his brother. I guess there are rules about that. What about wives?" she said, half to Frank. "Any rules about us? What did he say about me? I've been dreading it, but I guess I'll have to know sometime."

"You're not in the book either. It's not like that. Personal."

A thin laugh. "So. Mrs. Rochester. Stuck up there in the attic." She looked at Frank. "Just think what you're leaving out. A real saga. The loyal wife who follows you to Russia. Russia. Maybe you should lock me in the attic. Anybody'd be crazy to do that."

"You're not crazy," Frank said, mollifying, familiar territory.

"No, just drunk. You can say it. Who knows us better than Simon?" She stopped. "Except you don't anymore, do you? What it's like. In the beginning it wasn't so bad. You know, I had Richie to take care of, so I was busy–"

"I'm sorry about that," Simon said.

Joanna waved her hand. "I know, I know. Everybody was. But it wasn't that. Frank likes to explain me. He thinks I blame myself. But I don't. Well, you always do in a way, but I know it wasn't anybody's *fault*. We did everything we could. The hospital too. It was just–he died. And we didn't. So now what was there? Make dinner? We have someone for that. Do the shopping anyway. Shopping takes all day here. Lines. Anyway, who do you have over? The other agents?" She underlined the word. "One cozy evening after another. Scrabble with the Macleans. Gareth throwing up in a taxi.

He's downstairs, by the way, did you see him? He wanted to gossip. Of course. Don't worry," she said to Frank. "I didn't say a thing." She turned to Simon. "You have to keep in mind who these people are, what they're like. It's their nature. Gareth gets people to talk–he's such a loose cannon people think he must be safe–and he reports them. That's what he does. Perry was all right. Poor Perry. He didn't notice things. What it's really like. But he had Marzena. Has Frank told you about Marzena?" A look between them. "No, he wouldn't. But you should meet. You'd like her. Perry did. Of course the question is–I'd love your take on this–does she work for the Service or not? They'd have to approve the marriage, but did they actually arrange it?"

"Arrange it?"

"To keep Perry happy. They like to keep their old boys happy. And keep an eye on them. This way they'll know his every waking thought. Even what he says in his sleep. They got Gareth a boyfriend. Why not a loyal wife? Mostly loyal anyway. They like doing that. Using someone close."

"The car is here," Boris said from the window.

"Oh, and we were having such fun," she said, her voice forced, then looked down. "I'm sorry. This isn't the way I wanted this to go. I wanted it to be–I don't know, like it was." She looked up. "I haven't changed so much, have I?"

"We've all changed."

"Not you," she said, patting his chest. "Don't disapprove. I couldn't bear that. I'll be right as rain in the morning and then we'll start over, okay?"

"That's an excellent idea," Frank said, getting ready to go. "Did you bring a coat?"

"A coat?" Joanna said, dazed.

"It's still cold, nights. Boris, take home anything you like." He nodded to the spread of food. "I'll send someone up to clear," he

said, a show of normalcy, as if nothing had happened, just a drink and appetizers.

Joanna came closer. "So tomorrow? We can talk and talk. I want to know everything. Diana. Everything."

"Coming?" Frank said, almost at the door.

"Yes," Joanna said, then hugged Simon, putting her mouth near his ear, a low murmur. "He's up to something. I'm not crazy. You live with someone, you can sense it. He wants something. I don't know what yet. All of a sudden he wants you here. Why?"

"Maybe he wanted to see me," Simon said gently. "I wanted to see him."

"Oh, lovely Simon," she said, touching his cheek. "It's different here. You can't trust him. Any of them." She pulled back, a public voice. "Come early. There's so much to catch up on."

She followed Boris out, Frank lingering.

"I'm sorry," he said. "It's the excitement–your being here. Her sister came after Richie died and that helped. But no one since. Her family, anybody. Until you."

"Why not go see them? She still has her passport. She never renounced–"

Frank looked at him, then up at the chandelier, taking him by the sleeve and moving him out to the hall. Jo and Colonel Vassilchikov were at the other end, near the floor manager.

"It's all right out here," Frank said, voice low. "So you have been briefed. There's no other way you could have known that." Answering a question that hadn't been asked. "We'll take a walk tomorrow and talk. I do that every day. Boris won't think anything of it. Was it Pirie himself? I'll be curious–what he had to say."

"Frank," Simon said, dismayed, still hearing Jo, maybe everyone crazy.

"Be right there," Frank said to the others, raising his voice loud enough to carry, then turned back to Simon, conspiratorial. "We'll

talk. You forget. I know Don. I know how he thinks." Twelve years ago.

"Frank–"

"By the way," he said, not listening. "Don't say anything to Jo about–seeing her family. That's not really possible. You'd just upset her. We're–we're here."

And then he was gone, the long overcoat flapping around his legs. Simon watched them get into the elevator, then scanned the hall. No one but the old woman who kept the keys. And no doubt made a report. Boris listening in the car. Simon went back into his room. Were they listening now? "Run water in the bathroom," DiAngelis had said. "The radio loud." He glanced at the telephone, the light fixture again. Turn around. Leave. He went over to the window. Below Jo and Frank were getting into the car, a privilege, Boris looking out for them. What had the Germans called it? Protective custody. For your own good.

He looked over at the red stars on the Kremlin towers. A great space, big enough for parades to rumble through. You could talk there without running water. Line up to see Gareth's "bod-y." Watched. Listened to. In prison, some vast Victorian panopticon, so big you weren't aware of being inside. But if you kept going, just walked out of the square and didn't stop, over the endless flat land, reverse the trip he'd just made, you'd finally come to the visible fences–the barbed wire and attack dogs and watchtowers. No glowing red stars there. No way to pretend the surveillance was for your own good. One look at the wires and you'd know. He felt a tightening in his chest. He could get out, do his time, a week or two, and head back to Vnukovo, fly right over the barbed wire. But Frank and Jo– We're here, Frank had said. A life sentence.

He glanced at his watch, then took out a cigarette and turned on the table lamp next to the window. Open the window, DiAngelis had said. That'll be the signal you're okay.

The spring air was soft but chilly. She hadn't brought a coat, not feeling it.

"Smoke the whole thing. By the window, like you're a tourist. Looking at things."

"What if he doesn't see me?" The street below empty.

"He will."

"Who is he?"

"You don't want to know that."

"I mean, is he a Russian or–?"

"You don't want to know anything. You're just a guy here to see your brother. And now you're having a smoke. Not one of us."

"I'm not one of you."