

Author's Note: This story was written for **Mood-Y: Challenge 2** in **LiveJournal's Section VII** community.

The key mood is: **Calculating.**

This fanfic is an expansion (not technically a sequel, more a companion tale) to my story [THE NOT-SO-SOLITARY WEEKEND AFFAIR](#). In that story Napoleon is sequestered for the weekend in U.N.C.L.E.'s New York Headquarters before the official announcement of his promotion to North American Chief of Enforcement. Illya is assigned as his "bodyguard" (more like someone to keep him from flying the coop) by Mr. Waverly. Napoleon is of course antsy; so Illya comes up with a unique take on a chess game to keep Solo's mind occupied.

I should also note that in this story, the two men are not yet full-time field partners, though they have worked together on missions on occasion and are casual friends.

An anecdotal aside: Adolf Anderssen, whose quote I use as an intro to this story, was the founder of the "heroic-attacking" school of chess and one of the foremost composers of chess problems. Somehow, a quote by such a chess-player just seemed very apropos with regard to Napoleon's own style of play... in chess and in strategy in general.



Chess is the gymnasium of the mind.

Adolf Anderssen

CHESGAME

BY LAH

Summer 1963

U.N.C.L.E. Headquarters in New York City

The noun had been “Cape Verde”, the verb “mediate”, the adjective “insurgent,” and now Napoleon was positioning British-born Agent Southway to serve as the bishop for his next chess maneuver.

“You cannot be serious,” protested Illya bluntly. “Mr. Southway has a definite dislike of anything Portuguese.”

“He is rather persevering in his claim it was the Portuguese government, under pressure from the Nazis for information, that bruited about the tantalizing tidbit in 1943 that Churchill would possibly be on a commercial airliner out of Lisbon,” agreed Solo.

“And as a result the Luftwaffe shot down one such commercial airliner over Biscay Bay,” furthered Illya. “Need I also remind you that his father, who was a personal assistant to Leslie Howard, was onboard that targeted flight? And that he died in the crash? Yet you are going to have Southway consult with the Portuguese over possible Thrush connections of a pro-revolutionary group in Cape Verde? I just do not see the defensible logic in that, Napoleon.”

“Illya, do you think Agent Southway flaunts his personally acknowledged predisposition within his work sphere?” Napoleon posed the pivotal question. “That he has ever let it impede or influence his performance for the Command?”

“No, but—”

“And do you think he would ever even want it implied that any personal prejudice should call into question his performance on a mission?”

“Again no,” conceded Illya. “Still—”

“It’s like this: Reginald Southway is a top enforcement agent with a pristine record of which he is justly proud and thusly wants to keep pristine. Therefore he will go out on a limb to insure he sees both sides of this particular issue clearly. He will make doubly sure he doesn’t assume the Portuguese government is fabricating evidence to boost the idea of an association with Thrush simply to ensnare U.N.C.L.E.’s aid in eradicating a group opposed to its colonial rule. Conversely, he will go equally out of his way not to automatically or prematurely accept the notion that the pro-revolutionary group is innocent of any Thrush ties simply because he agrees with its underlying sentiments.”

“It’s a risky move, my friend,” insisted Illya.

“It’s a move worth the risk,” insisted Napoleon in turn as he shifted his Southway-assigned white bishop in an unconventional manner that captured two of Illya’s black pawns and put one of Kuryakin’s own bishops in a much weakened position.

Illya sighed discontentedly. “You do prefer concocting non-standard tactics.”

“Calculating, not concocting,” corrected Napoleon with a small smile. “And not always. Sometimes standard tactics can prove the most effective. For instance if the mediation regarding Thrush activities had needed to be about an insurgent group in Poland preaching independence from the Soviet Union, I would send you.”

“Because?” probed the other man.

“Because you understand the Eastern European mindset,” forwarded the soon to be North American Chief of Enforcement, “which most of our agents – with their Western roots – don’t.”

“That at least makes some sense,” Kuryakin allowed magnanimously.

Napoleon chuckled at the other man’s anticipated reaction. “I grant priority to employing some sense in all situations,” he subsequently guaranteed.

“Just not always common sense,” baited Illya with a challenging smirk.

“Oh, but you see, tovarisch, I make it my primary aim in life never to be common in anything,” teased back Napoleon with a conspiratorial wink. Then he proceeded to capture Illya’s most vulnerable bishop on the chessboard with a purposely conventional move.

—THE END—

