

Author's Note: Written for the [2015 Easter Eggs Challenge](#) on LiveJournal's [MFU Writers Survival School](#) community.

Recipient: [renn](#)

Prompt: [deadly easter egg hunt](#)



If there was one egg in it there were
nine,
Torpedo-like, with shell of gritty
leather,
All packed in sand to wait the trump
together

Robert Frost

NINE EGGS

BY [LAH](#)

Easter 1968

Nine eggs.

Nine chances to locate the object they were seeking.

Nine chances to guess wrong and die.

Or even guess right and still die.

Of certainty there was none.

This current dilemma facing the Command's crack enforcement team of Solo and Kuryakin had been initiated by Thrush of course. Another one of their "mad scientists" had developed a virus so lethal, it could wipe out a third of the population of the Earth in but seven days.

The scientist himself was now dead, the victim of a fatal gunshot wound by Kuryakin. But even death had not loosened his hold on the attention of U.N.C.L.E. Though the method for creating the virus had disappeared with the life of the scientist (as he was one of those men who kept his formulae strictly in his head), he nonetheless had left one capsule of the stuff existent. Where?

"We are in the season of resurrection," he had teased even as he lay dying, "and my genius will rise again from the most fragile symbols of that season! Or perhaps what will rise is more immediate destruction of those who seek to deny that genius its due." His last breath had appropriately been stolen by maniacal laughter.

That strangely triumphant self-eulogy had led to an "egg hunt" on the lawn of the scientist's Connecticut estate, which in turn had led to the discovery of these nine orbs of danger. Nine as that was the biblical symbol of divine completeness, the conveyance of absolute finality. The man had indeed imagined himself some sort of mental demi-god.

The two agents had cautiously gathered up the eggs and placed them in an empty duck's nest on the property for safety. But now came the truly tricky part: determining which egg or eggs to crack open.

"Okay, Illya," Napoleon stated easily to his partner, "your job is done. Take yourself a safe distance away please."

"What?" queried Illya in bewilderment. "What do you mean? You can't intend to open those eggs by yourself?"

"I am making my request an order, Agent Kuryakin."

"Napoleon, please don't pull rank. Not in this," Illya appealed in an almost desperate tone.

Solo jutted out his chin stubbornly. "The rank is mine to pull; so I will do so whenever I believe appropriate."

"With my scientific background, I'm the one who should do this," insisted Illya just as stubbornly.

"There isn't much science to be had here, and I'm the lucky one, remember."

Illya glowered determinedly at his partner, hoping against hope to somehow manage to "stare down" the other man's decision. But Napoleon only shook his head.

"The icy Russian glare won't work. Now get back and let me finish this."

Reluctantly – extremely reluctantly, Kuryakin did as bid. He didn't like it, but Solo was an enforcement agent the same as he was. They both knew and accepted the inevitability of facing death as inherent in their work. Napoleon didn't need or want a bodyguard, and he had no right to try and set himself up as one for the other man.

Once his partner was that safe distance away, Napoleon confronted the nine eggs nestled so seemingly innocuously in the nest at his feet. He lowered himself to sit cross-legged in the

grass and then took a moment to inhale deeply of the freshness of spring surrounding him. It might be the last time he ever enjoyed such scents; so he felt that moment was fully justified.

Then it came to him. Perhaps there was a way to get at least a bit of a hint regarding what each egg might contain. Lifting one of the eggs gingerly in his hand, he moved it under his nose and sniffed.

The slight scent of vinegar and something sweet underlying. Yes, he remembered...

Nitroglycerin: this egg held a nitro capsule more than likely, and cracking the shell would just as likely result in a rather colorful explosion not in pastel Easter tints but in the vivid red of his blood.

He placed the egg carefully back in the nest and lifted another. Again he sniffed. Again he was sure that odor of vinegar tinged with sweetness was present. So this egg too he replaced gently in the nest. He lifted a third egg and then a fourth: the process the same each time.

When it came to the fifth egg he sniffed and then sniffed again. The faint aroma didn't seem to be present. He sniffed a third time just to be certain. Then he closed his eyes and cracked the shell carefully against the edge of his shoe. The capsule inside was filled with a liquid in a rather lovely and spring-like teal hue. How like a Thrush scientist to make something so positively heinous wear a beautiful front.

Taking his handkerchief from his upper jacket pocket, he deftly and delicately wrapped the precious object within the linen square. Laying the parcel on the grass beside him, he then pulled out his communicator and transformed it into transmit mode.

"I have it, Illya," he assured his partner after opening the proper channel, "the capsule containing the virus."

Illya took a bit of time to respond, perhaps taking a moment himself to breathe a sigh of relief.

"Affirmative, Napoleon," the other agent finally spoke over the open comm line. "The other eggs?"

"All intact. They likely contain nitro; so have an explosive cleanup crew come to retrieve and deal with them."

"Copy that," came the business-like reply. Then Illya asked in a more personal manner, "More Solo luck?"

Napoleon thought of those nitroglycerin tablets his guardian grandfather had required for a heart problem diagnosed many years ago. Not explosive to be sure, but still the smell...

"Luck and good olfactory memory, tovarisch," was his simple verdict on the matter.

—THE END—

