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U.N.C.L.E. HQ

*Challenge Phrase*

## THE NOT-SO-SOLITARY WEEKEND AFFAIR

BY [LAH](#)

**Summer 1963**

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

“I hate this,” grumped Napoleon Solo for at least the twentieth time in the last hour by Illya Kuryakin’s reckoning. “I absolutely hate this.”

“I don’t think these temporary living quarters in U.N.C.L.E. HQ are so bad,” countered the Russian.

“It’s not the utilitarian digs,” expounded Napoleon, “nor the enforced company.”

“Thank you for saying so. Being assigned as your bodyguard this weekend was an unexpected turn in events.”

Napoleon shrugged. “Mr. Waverly may do the unexpected but never without some reason.” Though what that reason was left him stumped. After all, he was an experienced agent with no need for a babysitter.

“I’m a social creature,” Solo veered the conversation back to the original topic. “Spending a non-mission weekend cooped up at headquarters feels like solitary confinement.”

That brought a grin to Kuryakin’s face. This man who had taken the trouble to befriend him when he had arrived in New York about a year ago in many ways demonstrated an absolute aversion to inaction. If it wasn’t the frantic pace and life-and-death machinations of a Command mission, it was the lively chase and energetic romancing of an eligible female.

“You knew it was customary for the agent about to be named Chief of Enforcement to be sequestered here in HQ for the entire weekend beforehand in case Thrush got premature wind of the appointment.”

“I hoped Mr. Waverly might forego custom in my case,” admitted Napoleon a bit sheepishly.

“To accommodate your dating calendar?”

“No. Well, yes. Oh, I don’t know.”

“You’re bored.”

“To tears,” agreed Solo.

“Maybe if you occupied your mind with something,” proposed Illya.

“What do you suggest? I’ve already skimmed the file of every active Section II agent in North America.”

“You could start on the files for those in Section III.”

Napoleon’s only response to that was a weary groan.

The disgruntled American sat in an armchair with his stocking feet raised up on a nearby coffee table: a very un-Napoleon-Solo-like pose to be sure. Solo seemed primed to scheme his way out of this seclusion. If he succeeded, and Kuryakin knew the other man well enough to have little doubt he would, it would sit but ill with Waverly and Illya would take the brunt of the Old Man’s annoyance. Yet more than that, this whole concept of sequestering the soon-to-be-named CEA was indeed a security matter. Napoleon would doubtless become a prime Thrush target after his appointment; no reason to give them a head-start on that aim before the title was even official.

“You like to play chess,” remembered Kuryakin as an ingenious mental lure for the tactically creative American sniggled into his mind.

“No offense, tovarisch, but your moves are too casebook to keep me fully occupied on the game.”

“What if we modified the game to be more pertinent to your upcoming position?”

Napoleon’s interest was piqued. “What’s your idea?”

“We let the chess pieces represent various U.N.C.L.E. personnel from those files you have so diligently perused. The point of the game becomes using the best individual to do the job according to a set of mission criteria randomly created by drawing words prewritten on slips of paper. Then we can debate those choices between us, providing pros and cons of my ‘casebook’ approach with your more inventive paradigm.”

Napoleon’s eyes blazed with enthusiasm at the prospect. “You’re on, Kuryakin! Get a dictionary!”

Illya obliged and the game of strategy commenced.

The diversion held Napoleon’s attention for the long hours during the not-so-solitary weekend with the one man cunning Waverly had understood would find the means to mentally engage and thus keep securely penned his soon-to-be Chief of Enforcement.

—THE END—

