

Author's Note: *Written for the 2013 Easter Eggs Exchange*



You see, science has overcome time and space. Well, Harvey has overcome not only time and space, but any objections.

Elwood P. Dowd in HARVEY

IF WARNINGS WERE RABBITS...

BY [LAH](#)

Spring 1969
Interrogation Room 4
U.N.C.L.E. New York HQ

"I don't know why you won't believe me," stated the ordinary man with the extraordinary story.

“Maybe because you keep telling us you weren’t there,” stated the Number 1 in Section II of U.N.C.L.E. North America.

“I wasn’t actually in the room, no,” explained the man. “But I... uhmm... Well, I know it’s not polite, but I eavesdropped.”

“You eavesdropped, supposedly not more than three hours ago, on a conversation taking place in a suite adjoining your own in the Hotel Beau-Rivage in Geneva, Switzerland,” summarized the Number 2 in Section II of U.N.C.L.E. North America.

“Yes, yes, I did! And that’s when I overheard—”

“Mr. Lembeck, it isn’t physically possible for you to be here in New York now and to have been in Geneva just three hours ago,” Kuryakin bluntly interrupted the man.

“Normally, no. But Leopold arranged it for me. I’ve always wanted to stay in that grand hotel with its panoramic views of Lake Geneva and Mont Blanc, and all its magnificent past. Empress Elisabeth – Sissi – died there you know, after she was stabbed by an Italian anarchist. I’ve always had a fascination with Hapsburg history, so Leopold—”

“And again, Leopold is a pooka?” This time it was Solo who interrupted the man’s steady spiel.

Lembeck nodded vigorously. “But Leopold appears to me as a rabbit.”

“As the Easter bunny?” sarcastically suggested the Russian, quite familiar with the American silliness of a fluffy-tailed rodent going around delivering sweets to children at this time of the year.

“No, no, no, not as any sort of bunny!” protested the man emphatically. “As a rabbit. Leopold hates being referred to as a bunny. And, at just a hair under six foot four, I think he has the stature to mandate that strict differential in naming conventions, don’t you?”

Illya Kuryakin turned toward his partner and immediate superior, Napoleon Solo, and rolled his eyes in frustration. Solo in turn shook his head in equal frustration.

“All right, let’s begin again,” forwarded Napoleon for at least the half-dozen time during this questioning session.

“But there’s no time!” exclaimed Lembeck in the throes of his own frustration. “I already told you those men are planning some kind of chemical bomb attack on the Palais des Nations. Their main target is someone named Waverly who is set to give a speech this afternoon.”

Napoleon shifted a little in his seat as Illya stared intimidatingly at Lembeck.

“Do you know who Mr. Waverly is?” demanded Illya.

“I haven’t a damn clue!” Lembeck declared hotly. “But the NYPD obviously does, since the city’s finest hustled me lickety-split to this under-the-radar place when I told them my story.”

“What about Thrush?” asked Napoleon, ignoring the man’s outburst entirely.

“I don’t have a social disease!”

Lembeck's testiness was increasing by the minute, and the CEA knew only too well that wouldn't do at all if they wanted to get at the truth behind his audacious claim.

"I think we all could use a bit of a breather. Why don't we get you something cold to drink?" Napoleon forwarded with one of his most charming smiles.

Lembeck nodded. "Lemonade would be lovely."

"And carrot juice for Leopold?" Illya couldn't resist goading the man.

In response to that remark, Kuryakin felt a rather sharp jab to his right side. Assuming his partner had elbowed him, he glared at Napoleon as the other man nonchalantly got to his feet.

"Lemonade it is," Solo promised Lembeck. "Come on, Illya," he then prompted his partner to accompany him out of the interrogation room.

Once outside, Illya inquired brusquely as he rubbed his sore ribs, "Did you have to nudge me so hard?"

"Nudge you?"

"You know: when you elbowed me after I made that carrot juice remark."

"Illya, I didn't elbow you then or at any other time."

"My sore ribs provide evidence of the contrary." Illya continued absently rubbing the right side of his ribcage as he questioned the man currently in charge of the day-to-day U.N.C.L.E. operations in North America during the temporary absence of the Number 1 in Section I. "What are you going to do about this threat he insists is going down during Waverly's speech at the UN in Geneva?"

"I'm calling it into the Old Man's security team in Switzerland," stated Napoleon as he took out his communicator to do just that. "We can't take the risk, and it will do no harm for them to be on heightened alert."

"Might also do no harm to have a Section III team there check out that suite in the Hotel Beau-Rivage," submitted Illya.

"Just what I was thinking, tovarisch," agreed Napoleon as he flipped his communicator into transmit mode.

A couple hours later...

Napoleon and Illya gazed through the one-way observation glass that peered into Interrogation Room 4, watching Lembeck in apparently animated and quite friendly conversation with the air.

"He and Leopold certainly seem to enjoy each other's company," commented Illya sardonically.

"A man and his pooka should always be the best of buddies," granted Napoleon with a lopsided grin.

“What do you make of it, Napoleon? I mean him knowing about that gas incendiary Thrush had somehow gotten inside the Palais des Nations, right inside the very podium from which Mr. Waverly was to give his speech?”

“I’m not going to try to make anything of it, Illya. I’m just going to be grateful it came to our attention in time, no matter the means that it did.”

“You surely don’t believe in pookas?” queried Illya straightforwardly. “In creatures that have the ability to take a human being anywhere, anytime, outside the normal confines of time and space?”

“All I believe is that Lembeck wanted us to be warned about that threat. That he made up a fantastical story to do it doesn’t really matter. However he knew those details, he did know them, and he was willing to let us know in turn.”

“You can’t ignore the possibility he was part of the initial plot.”

“And then got cold feet,” confirmed Napoleon with a nod. “We’ll set up Section III surveillance on him for a few months and have Section IV investigate him thoroughly in the meanwhile. But somehow, Illya, just going by my gut, I don’t think we’ll find anything out of ordinary about the guy. Other than Leopold of course,” he added as his eyes returned to the man in the interrogation room and his seemingly one-sided conversation.

With that the two agents re-entered the room.

“You’re free to go, Mr. Lembeck,” Napoleon informed him. “And, on behalf of the United Network Command for Law and Enforcement, let me extend my thanks for your willingness to provide us the information you did.”

“So this Waverly fellow is safe?” asked Lembeck anxiously.

Napoleon nodded slowly.

“As are all those attending his speech at the Palais des Nations today,” furthered Illya.

Lembeck took a deep breath of pure relief. “Seems you were right, Leopold,” he then remarked easily. “It was important we cut short our sojourn in Geneva to get this to the right sources here in New York.” After a brief pause where it appeared he was listening to something... or someone... he continued. “Yes, yes, Leopold, I know I shouldn’t doubt you about such things. Pookas may like mischief, but I do understand you all have a true aversion to pure violence.”

Illya passed Napoleon a rather exasperated look, in response to which Napoleon only shrugged.

A Section V internal security operative arrived at that point to escort the ordinary man with the extraordinary story from the inside premises of U.N.C.L.E. headquarters. As Lembeck passed in front of his guide out of the now unlocked pneumatic door of Interrogation Room 4, a huge shadow – much taller than the man himself – appeared on the gunmetal wall beside him. That shadow unmistakably displayed the tall upright ears of a rabbit.

Illya blinked. “Did you see—”

“I didn’t see a thing, Ilya,” Napoleon cut him off matter-of-factly. “Nothing at all,” he emphasized as he hastily exited the room with Kuryakin following close in his wake.

—THE END—

