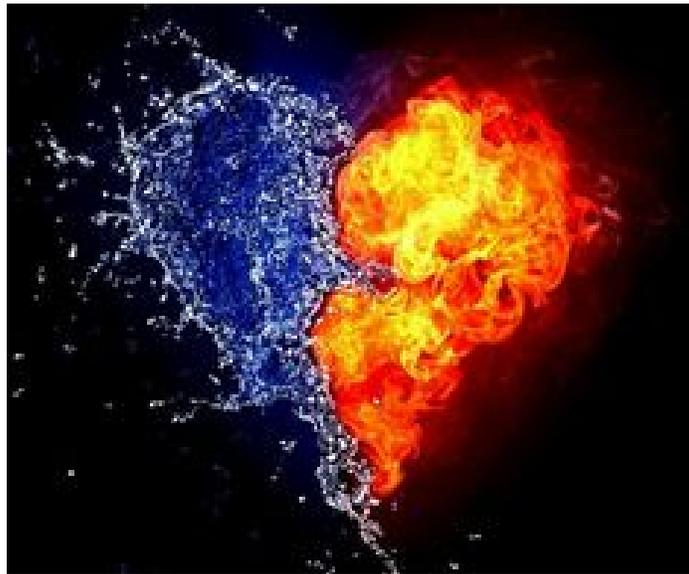


Author's Note: Written for the [QUOTEME #1: 2016](#) challenge on [LIVEJOURNAL'S SECTION VII](#).



The works must be conceived with fire
in the soul but executed with clinical
coolness.

Joan Miro

FIRES OF THE SOUL

BY [LAH](#)

Summer 1964

There was not much about human nature that escaped the insightful perception of Alexander Waverly. He was a master at understanding the many vagaries of personality locked within assets of the heart, powers of the mind and strengths of the soul. He also could pinpoint possible weaknesses in all these areas with dead-on accuracy. It was definitely a rare type of genius, one that stood him in good stead indeed within his role as the top administrator for the United Network Command for Law and Enforcement. Today, based upon that natural talent, this "first among equals" of the five Continental Chiefs of U.N.C.L.E. would make the final commitment on his proposal for the permanent field pairing of Napoleon Solo, the Chief Enforcement Agent for the Northwest Division, with Illya Kuryakin, the organization's first Soviet enforcement agent and one who Waverly intended to promote to Section II Number 2 Northwest.

Now it was absolutely true the other four Continental Chiefs were not convinced this pairing would prove another of Waverly's masterstrokes. Knowingly suave, intuitively charming, diplomatically persuasive Solo teamed with the blunt sometimes brash, fundamentally no-

nonsense, dispassionately straight-to-the-fore Russian? It seemed a risky proposition at best. Both men were successful operatives on their own terms, to be sure. But together? There was some speculation they would trip each other up with their vastly different approaches, and that of course could translate into less mission success overall.

Yet of this possibility Alexander Waverly had unequivocally no fear. The two men were generally friendly, and that was most certainly a positive point since many of the Western agents still held unvoiced objections to the first Soviet in their midst. Still that wasn't to Waverly's turn of mind the deciding factor on favoring the pairing. The true deciding factor was what his instincts told him about the inner makeups of both men.

Napoleon Solo, undoubtedly his best operative, was the epitome of what was generally perceived as the perfect spy. This American was composed under any and all circumstances, never rattled by the unexpected, and always able to find an imaginative alternative when initial plans failed. Ilya Kuryakin, a close second to Solo with regard to successfully completing difficult assignments, was very different. The Russian was a meticulous planner who worked out details down to the nth degree. He was much less likely than Solo to utilize any sort of unconventional tactic within a given situation. Yet on the whole his primary more traditional conception was refined to such a science, it rarely required ad-hoc adjustments. And Alexander Waverly clearly saw equally reflected in both men exactly what was needed to do the undeniably demanding tasks facing them in their positions within U.N.C.L.E. For without question what was most needed was a burning inner fire to never accept defeat shielded efficaciously by an outer mask of cool efficiency.

Both men indeed had this essential ingredient of character, though diversely expressed. Solo's inner fire was more an open hearth that encompassed wanting always to protect humanity. His upbringing within a political environment, raised by an ambassadorial grandfather in the midst of foreign countries sometimes with less-than-friendly outlooks toward his own, had schooled him in the most acceptable way to bank that fire into manageable proportions. His methods of choice were thus tact and charisma. Kuryakin's inner fire was more a warm glow that encompassed his vital nucleus of self-discipline. The Soviet way was unrelenting. Kuryakin fully embraced that iron way, letting the warmth of his private passion for the good of humanity radiate ever-so-gently through this solid core.

The truth was simply that the two men complemented each other in temperament much more than was generally realized. One could aid the other from leaning too far either way, and Alexander Waverly knew that was a good thing, a very good thing.

So today – after several past test pairings on assignments since Alexander Waverly was most assuredly not a haphazard administrator – he would take the necessary steps to promote the Russian. Subsequently he would sign-off on the creation of the permanent field team of Napoleon Solo and Ilya Kuryakin. A field team that Alexander Waverly discerned within the fiery depths of his own soul would be the unqualified best U.N.C.L.E. would ever produce.

—THE END—

