



Uncovered Passion

Christopher Golliday & Melissa Golliday

Published: 2009

Categorie(s): Fiction, Romance

Tag(s): romance, paranormal, shape shifter, spies, new york city, russia

Chapter 1

Moscow
September 2, 2003

Sasha Verochka sat in the seat next to Dr. Nessa Petrov, her handler and the closest thing to a mother she had. That was sad since the same woman had been one of the scientists who had hovered over her as they tested her ability. A telepath, Sasha's gift was of keen interest to her country. Sadly, she would give anything to be born without it. All it had ever brought her was isolation and pain.

Sasha's curse, or gift, as most would call it, wasn't selective so she constantly picked up the thoughts of those around her leading to migraine headaches and the occasional seizure. Luckily for her, Nessa had eventually developed a drug which allowed her to function somewhat in the world around her. Glancing out the sedan window, Sasha watched the flood of tourists who walked towards her nation's largest attraction—the Kremlin. Once again, she realized just how sheltered she was as she allowed her mind to pick up on the stray thoughts of those who passed by the vehicle.

For eighteen out of nineteen years of her young life, she had been in a lead encased room at the agency which protected her from the side effects of her cursed ability. The FSB had always told her it was to keep her safe from outside threats, but Sasha wondered if it was more to keep her in than anything else. Any excuse was better than none she guessed.

Blushing at some of the more lewd thoughts she intercepted from passersby, Sasha was thankful once again that her medication allowed her to shield herself from the constant mental bombardment. The gentle touch on her hand brought her gaze back to the car and to Nessa, whose concerned look reminded her that this was the only person who saw her as a being with feelings, needs, and desires, and not just a national weapon.

Nessa's grimace and furrowed brows had showed her distaste at handing Sasha a mission that few were sure she was ready for. But the

upper echelon bureaucrats were just itching to see how a tool long believed to be defective, could benefit mother Russia. Nessa's motherly thoughts warmed the girl who had never had a family. Gently squeezing the older woman's hand, Sasha said, "its okay Nessa. I want to do this, I think I need to."

Nessa's smile was half hearted at best. "You should review the file again before going out there to meet your target."

Touched by the concern, Sasha pulled out the file they had given her last evening and felt the same curious warmth curling in her stomach as she opened it and stared at the pictures within the manila envelope. Her mission was to discover the real purpose for American Garrick Caldwell's visit to her country. A former Marine, her superiors were pretty sure that he was now a CIA operative and they needed her to not only confirm it but to discover what his objective was. It should be a piece of cake, an in and out job. Or so they had told her.

However, the more she stared at the surveillance pictures the more a foreboding feeling crept over her, making her rethink their assessment. Her heartbeat accelerated as her fingers traced the ruggedly cut jaw of Garrick's picture. She had never seen a more handsome man in her life and those beautiful blue eyes were the kind that a girl could drown in.

Nessa's thoughts intruded causing her to quickly shuffle the pictures underneath the report that had accompanied it. Feeling her cheeks tingle with blush, Sasha suppressed her smile. "So, I find him a little attractive?" Actually, she found him more than a little, considering the dream she had about him last night.

"Just remember that he was a member of Force Recon. This man won't hesitate to kill you if he discovers who and what you are—an agent and threat to his freedom, especially if he is caught. His government will leave him high and dry so get those kinds of thoughts out of your head." Nessa grabbed her chin and leaned towards her so that they were practically eye to eye. "I mean it. This isn't a game."

Pulling her chin free, Sasha set the file back down on her lap. "I know. It's not like I've been harboring sexual fantasies about the man, I just think he's good looking. Cut me some slack."

The older woman sighed. "Well...you better get out there because there is no telling how long he'll stay here...and Sasha, don't take your time with this. Do it quick and extradite yourself. Got it?"

"Alright." Stepping out of the passenger side door, Sasha took a calming breath. Focused on moving towards her target, she took slow

strides and continued measured breathing to slow her heart rate. She walked along the concrete sidewalk slowly taking in her surroundings. Tourists and Russians alike mulled around the square talking and shopping.

Garrick Caldwell was currently staring with awe at the ancient structure that drew so many from all corners of the world. Trying not to stare, Sasha tried unsuccessfully to forget just how kissable his full lips looked or how dangerously sexy his military short haircut made him seem. Groaning, Sasha wondered why her first assignment had to be a man so gorgeous that it forced her to think naughty things she shouldn't.

Garrick stared around him in avid fascination glad once again that he wouldn't have to worry about business for the rest of this week. His superiors didn't want to spoil his cover as a tourist. Good thing. It meant he could relax after this. Garrick turned back to the building before him. It was definitely something to see, so old and significant to history. Here, Tsars and communist premieres had ruled with iron fists while events which would shape Europe and the world played out all around Moscow and Russia. Twice dictators with world changing armies had come here and been defeated by a Russian army allied with its country's frigid winter temperatures.

His nose sniffed the air at the strangely alluring scent of strawberries and cream causing his cock to strain against his jeans. Almost against his will, he turned towards the arousing scent. And there he saw her. The beautiful brunette with high, full breasts which danced in a bouncing, swaying motion entranced him. Helplessly lost to the sight before him, Garrick never felt anything as strong as the throbbing sensation coursing through his balls to the tip of his now engorged penis.

Her long chocolate brown hair caressed her back and the thin cotton material of her light blue shirt. Amber colored eyes highlighted the creamy white complexion while her hourglass figure was the stuff wet dreams were made of. His feet were moving towards her even as he found himself deluded with the fantasy that she too was moving towards him in a helplessly magnetic way. He would give his left nut for an opportunity to sink his cock into what he just knew had to be the tightest, wettest pussy he had ever felt.

The rosy color appearing upon her cheeks had him smiling a predatory smile at the near virginal reaction he was getting from her and yeah, she was coming towards him as well. It wouldn't be the first time he had been approached by a beautiful woman. When he had been in the Marines quite a few giggly women had come on to him asking him to

pose in a picture with them while he had been in uniform. Had even had one girl ask him to write his number in her panties.

Almost on top of one another, Garrick felt himself at a loss for words. "Hello..." what the heck was that about? He wasn't some nerdy teenager without a clue how to flirt, but he found himself at a loss as to how to proceed. He didn't know if she was Russian or another tourist like himself so he wasn't sure if one of his usual pickup lines would work, especially since he didn't know enough Russian to do them justice. Not to mention, the shy glances and rosy hued cheeks had him thinking that she wasn't that experienced when it came to players. Not that he considered himself a player, per se.

"I'm Garrick Caldwell. I was wondering whether or not you would like to have some lunch with me—my treat." It wasn't smooth or slick but he had a feeling that she wasn't used to those things. He wasn't the kind of guy who toyed with girls who couldn't handle the game.

Sasha's nipples were still feeling that tight pinched feeling she had experienced for the first time a few minutes ago when she had first noticed him looking at her. Her panties also felt damp from the curious moisture that had pooled low when she had first begun to catch the mental images of him thrusting his penis into her. Damn it! The warm tingling feeling was back in her cheeks. Was she going to be blushing the entire mission?

"That would be nice, thank you." Pointing to the left, "there is a nice restaurant over there." Sasha's cheeks pulled her lips into an ear to ear smile. He thought her accent was sexy. Giving in to the urge to touch him, she marveled at how thick his biceps were as her arm wrapped around his. She fought hard to resist the urge to lay her head on his shoulder so that she could catch a closer whiff of the masculine smell of him.

Awkwardly walking with him towards the restaurant, Sasha hoped she wasn't doing anything wrong by walking arm in arm with him. Unfortunately she didn't have a whole lot of experience at this. The few dates she had been on since the miracle drug had been even more uncomfortable than this. However strangely enough the erotic images she was getting from him were tempered by the knowledge that he was aware of her apprehension to a certain extent. Relaxing slightly, she knew that he wouldn't force her to do anything she didn't consent to. While relieved, she felt a certain strength at the knowledge.

His inner beast could smell the arousal dripping from her and had the lascivious desire to drag her somewhere so that he could strip

the layers of clothing off of her was strong. He never before had this kind of urge to see a woman naked and ready for hot sweaty sex. He had to remind himself for the second time that she definitely seemed too naive for that kind of thing. His mama would be disappointed in him if he broke some poor girl's heart.

"Do you have the day off or are you on your lunch break?" He hoped the latter wasn't it because he really wanted to spend the day with her, which was very stupid. He already knew that he couldn't be seducing her but he had helpless urge to spend more time with her.

"I have the day off. Why do you ask?"

Garrick watched the young woman brush some of the long strands of her hair behind her ear so that she could catch an unobstructed view of him. She turned her head slightly up to meet his eyes. He really shouldn't be feeling this glad about her having the day off but he was. And he didn't even know her name. What was he a high school freshman again? "I'm Garrick Caldwell by the way..." He stopped himself from stating the obvious that he was an American. He really had regressed to a state of geekdom. Why was she giggling?

Sasha couldn't help it. He was so cute. He'd introduced himself to her twice now. She turned her head back to see that the sedan Nessa had been driving was long gone. Unable to suppress her smile, Sasha held onto Garrick's arm as they continued their walk to the restaurant doors. "Nice to meet you Garrick, I'm Sasha Verochka."

Unlike her previous two dates, this man made her feel comfortable about her awkwardness and shyness. And, while he had the same lustful feelings those other two men had, she didn't feel grossed out in the least. On the contrary, she felt moisture pool and dampen her panties. Nessa had never really explained the birds and the bees to her. Sasha guessed that she was supposed to have figured that out on her own. Of course, with the seedy men her boss had set her up with, she hadn't learned anything of use. In fact she had been turned off on sex in general until she had seen Mr. Caldwell's picture in his file. She had taken the file to her room to "study" at Nessa's suggestion. What Nessa hadn't known was that Sasha had laid on her bed and did nothing more than stare at Garrick's picture. It was hard to focus on the task at hand with him right here in the flesh.

Sasha... Garrick let her name play over in his mind. It was a beautiful name. It suited her and made sense. A beautiful name for a beautiful woman. Wasn't that a line he had used before? For some reason, none of the usual pick up lines Garrick had ever used felt right to say to this woman.

As he opened the restaurant door to escort her in, he inhaled again her scent. It had been painful to dull the erection he had sported since meeting her.

“Ladies first.” Garrick said politely as he let his hand linger at the small of her back. She felt delicate and small against his tall frame. He wanted to take her back to his hotel room and ravish every inch of that luscious body. For right now though, he’d wine and dine her and see what came next. After all, he was leaving soon anyway.

Chapter 2

Sasha looked hard at the menu in front of her. She'd only eaten at one restaurant her entire life and that was just last week when Nessa took her out to practice for her mission. The agency didn't want her to look suspicious. And boy had she ever. She had given her surroundings more than just the once over. She had examined everything. Well, as well as one could from the confinements of their booth. This time around, Sasha kept her focus on the menu and Garrick. Ordering a chicken dish, Sasha tried to make polite conversation after he ordered the same.

"Have you ever been to Russia before?" She asked innocently.

"Honestly, no I can't say that I have. From what I have seen so far everything here is beautiful." Sending a sly glance towards her, he wondered if she had picked up on his connotation.

"I saw that you were standing near the Kremlin. Have you seen many other sights yet? Perhaps I could play tour guide for you while you are here." Sasha hoped that didn't sound too presumptuous. She might as well use this mission to see a few things herself. It wasn't like she had a whole lot of time to explore her country, what with training and business meetings.

"I'd love to." Garrick put his menu down and stared at her with a smile full of sensual promise. Who wouldn't want to cruise around with an incredibly hot girl as the tour guide?

His overly erotic thoughts flashed through Sasha's mind causing her to shiver in response. She wasn't used to this kind of thing and unlike her previous two dates, if you could call it that since they hadn't even gone to a nice place to eat, Sasha found herself excited and yet cornered in a thrilling but threatening way. She wasn't making any sense. Sasha just knew that she was loving every minute of this, whatever it was and she didn't want it to end.

The waiter finally returned to bring them their meal and refill their glasses causing the curious sensation which floated between them to dull to a simmer. Taking a bite, Sasha hummed in appreciation at the savory flavor which coated her tongue. Looking at Garrick, she found herself

smiling at the hesitant bite he took at the unfamiliar dish. The appreciative sound she made at her meal must have reassured him that it was good because he took the bite and smiled. "There are a number of old churches that we can see or if you would rather I know where there are a number of tourist shops that we can visit."

"Both sound good... why don't we visit one church, a few shops and then we can have dinner; if you like."

In her mind, she could clearly see Garrick fantasizing about suckling and caressing her breasts which caused her nipples to harden in a delightful but uncomfortable way. Suppressing a delicious shiver, Sasha sighed. She really wasn't making any sense. She knew that she should be focusing on finishing her mission but something was keeping her from doing that. All she wanted to do was to savor this moment. "Sure, we can do that."

The meal flew by as Garrick regaled her with a series of amusing stories and jokes that had her laughing one minute while his thoughts caused her to squirm in her seat trying to relieve the pressure building between her legs. Before Sasha and Garrick realized it, the lunch crowd had departed. Looking at the clock, Sasha figured they would likely be having a late dinner by the time they finished sight-seeing. "We better get going if you want to see everything."

"We'll see what we see. As far as I'm concerned the best part of my vacation is right here with you." He knew that sounded like some kind of line but he meant it. Her eyes and face were so expressive that even though he had done the majority of the talking, he had enjoyed this date more than any other he had ever been on. "Why don't you use the restroom while I'll take care of the bill?"

"Okay, I'll be right back." Watching her get up, Garrick's eyes drifted over her delightful curves as she shyly hid her face and body by turning around to walk away. He was fine with that because it gave him a good look at her heart shaped bottom that was hands down the nicest ass he had ever seen. Triple X fantasies were born instantly as he allowed himself to mentally undress the Russian beauty.

She paused for what seemed like an eternity before sashaying in that age old way that women had when they wanted to put on a show for a man. He felt like kicking himself because he knew that if continued to spend more time with her then he would definitely end up crossing that line into outright seduction, which... would it be a bad thing really? As long as he gave her a choice and an out then she could make her own decisions. Signaling the waiter over, he handed the man his credit card.

Sasha couldn't believe that she was enticing the American. The minute his thoughts had focused on her backside she had deliberately put a sway into her walk, which was a dangerous game she probably shouldn't be playing, especially when she was deliberately trying to entice the man she was supposed to be spying upon. Pushing open the bathroom door, she froze at the sight of Nessa standing in front of the sink.

"What's taking you so long?" Nessa's arms were crossed and an eyebrow raised.

"Can you not scare me like that? Dear God. If I didn't know better, I'd think you didn't trust me. It's not my fault he hasn't thought about his mission yet." Sasha walked into the stall and shut the door as she spoke. She didn't want someone who knew her so well reading the look on her face.

"That's why you're supposed to be tripping him up by asking the kind of personal questions which will get him to think about it." Nessa had moved to where she stood right outside the stall door, effectively blocking Sasha's escape.

This wasn't good. Nessa knew that Sasha was stalling because they both figured that if she asked him questions about his livelihood and why he had chosen Russia to vacation in then she would know everything she needed to know. Yet, here she was flirting and enticing the man because...well...she didn't know why. "I'll do that as soon as I have him sufficiently lured into a false sense of security. What are you doing here anyway? I think I can find my way back to the agency."

Nessa stood out there quietly waiting but inside her mind was in turmoil. "Stop worrying about me. Yes he's good looking and I find him charming but I'll do my duty." Why did that thought cause her such discomfort?

Nessa sighed. "Sasha you are playing a game that could bite you in the butt. If I were you I would keep in mind that you wouldn't find him quite as charming if he knew what your job was."

Exiting the stall, Nessa's eyes followed Sasha as she washed up in the sink "But he doesn't know and you're worrying too much."

"And you're surprised about that. It was supposed to be a simple in and out and here you are procrastinating." Nessa handed Sasha a paper towel to wipe her hands with. "I'll cover for you but you better have the answers we need or prepare for some hard questions from the directors."

Flinging the paper towel into the trash harder than she intended, Sasha turned to Nessa with a defiant sigh and rolled her eyes. "I will

okay. I have to get out there before he starts to get concerned." Sasha left before Nessa made her any angrier. Sasha wasn't stupid nor was she a traitor. She would get the job done but for right now she was going to have a little fun. After all that she had been through and gone without, they could cut her a little slack.

Garrick could tell she was angry from the lines around her mouth, which left him a little confused because she hadn't been angry when she had left their table so he didn't think it was anything he done. "Is everything alright?"

"Yeah, just fine. Let's go."

Chapter 3

Walking in silence to the old Russian Orthodox Church, Garrick wanted to make her tell him what was wrong but was afraid that he would offend her if he tried. So they quietly walked around the old church and its outlying buildings. Eventually she seemed to calm down. Strangely as he watched her walk around the center court yard, he couldn't help but notice that she looked around as if she'd never seen it but maybe he was imagining it. It wasn't like he knew the girl well enough to say he could read her that accurately.

Leaving the church, they began to walk in and out of the various shops as dusk receded and night blanketed the city. Garrick missed all the sexual tension and flirting that had existed between them earlier when they had been in the restaurant. He wasn't sure what happened but he was pretty sure that the change had occurred while she had been in the bathroom. Since she wouldn't talk about it, the only thing he could do was find a way for her to forget about it.

Seeing a nightclub opening its doors, inspiration hit. "Hey how about we get a drink and do a little dancing?"

Sasha hesitated. She probably should just get her mission over with but she had never been dancing or in a club, nor had a drink. "That sounds like a good idea. I'd like that."

Walking into the club, she was only slightly disappointed. There weren't that many people inside but then again it had only just opened. Sasha counted all of fifteen people, give or take a few. There were about four sitting on round leather topped stools at a large mahogany bar, complete with your average middle aged balding bartender. Garrick's hand slipped around her waist as he walked her to the bar. Tendrils of feeling that had been dormant since leaving the restaurant blossomed again as a whole nest of butterflies swirled around her bloodstream causing warm tingles to flourish within her breasts and womb.

At the bar, her breathing faltered as his hand left her hip to cup her ass. She felt that same curious wetness dampening her panties again as her pussy began to throb in a weirdly pleasurable and uncomfortable

manner. She really should remove his hand but found that she couldn't bring herself to do it. Sasha had to bite back the moan as Garrick gave her backside a slight squeeze.

"We'll have two of the house specialties" Garrick ordered at the bar.

Sasha was unable to concentrate on what the bartender fixed them because Garrick had started caressing her ass again. Why couldn't she bring herself to stop him from taking such liberties? They were in a public place and yet she didn't want him to stop. Moistening her lips, she found herself drowning in his Caribbean blue eyes.

Garrick nearly came in his pants as he watched her pink tongue dart out to wet her lips. He was only dimly aware of the fact that the bartender had put their drinks on the bar. For several seconds he stood there watching a very aroused Sasha and she was definitely aroused, her breathing was shallow and quick while her eyes were slightly dilated. Finally reaching into his pocket, he pulled out some of his money. "Keep the change" he told the man who had passed them their drinks.

Tossing the drink back, Garrick let the burn fade and watched as Sasha gasped and coughed when she tossed back hers as well. Pulling her into the circle of his arms, Garrick let his chest press against her breasts as he rubbed Sasha's back. He had never felt this hard from just a few simple touches. "How about a few dances?"

Stepping back to allow her space after she nodded her assent, Garrick took her hand and gently led her to the dance floor. Moving to the beat, he noticed the unsure look on her face as she looked around. Had she never been dancing before? "Don't worry about anyone else. Just move to the beat of the music. All that matters is that you have fun."

After about the second dance, the ear to ear smiles and laughter began to spill out as she let loose and had fun. She was entrancing although it was the way her breasts moved and shook that really had him going. He had to have her. Consequences be damned, he was going to take this as far as she let him take it.

Sasha moved and danced with Garrick and like him didn't care about the consequences. She had never felt like this before. She didn't think she was ready to go all the way especially since he could be a rival agent but oh how tempted he made her to want to find out what it was like. She felt so alive being with him. But, a part of her wanted to keep that for someone special who she would spend the rest of her life with. Of course, how likely was that to happen with the way the agency kept her on a short leash?

She began to lose track of time as they alternated between dancing and sitting at the tables where he kept her entertained with what was becoming an inexhaustible supply of amusing personal stories. She almost wished she had some to share with him especially since he seemed like such a nice man. The drinks that he brought back to her since that first one had all been non-alcoholic because he didn't want to take advantage of her. That much Sasha had been able to pick up.

The sudden sharp pain in her head made her realize that so much time had passed that she had missed her medication dose. Grapping her purse, she quickly stood up. "Excuse me; I need to use the restroom."

"Is everything alright?" Concern was in his eyes as he stood up and reached out to place a comforting hand on her arm. The last time she had entered the restroom she had come out distant and withdrawn.

"Yeah, I just need to go. I'll be right back." Her hand rubbed at her temple as she practically darted away in search of the facilities.

Garrick was having a blast but he probably shouldn't keep her out so late. She could have a job, or worse, a boyfriend and what kind of jerk kept her out when she was in pain. A few minutes later when she came out, he noticed that her eyes were still pinched in pain and her hand was still rubbing at her temples. "Why don't I take you home?"

"No, we don't have to do that."

She tried valiantly to keep from showing her discomfort. "It's okay. You're not disappointing me. We can always do something together tomorrow if you're off from work that is?"

"I'd love that and yes I'm off. But, I would rather you show me where you're staying at and I'll stop by and pick you up tomorrow."

Garrick couldn't blame her for not wanting him to know where she lived having only just met him. "That sounds fine to me. By the way, I just had a thought and wanted to ensure myself I was wrong. You, by chance, don't have a boyfriend at home do you?"

Sasha let loose a giggle. "No, there's definitely no boyfriend. Trust me; I'm not that kind of person. Plus, I don't have time to deal with more than one man at a time."

Reaching out to take her hand, he walked with her out of the club and into the thinly populated streets with its closing shops. At this time of night, only clubs and bars would be open. Shivering at the chill which was settling in the air, Garrick wrapped an arm around Sasha to bring her closer to him so that they could share their warmth.

As they walked, Garrick marvel at what he had always thought to be a myth—a comfortable silence. In his experience, silences were periods of

time when you realized that you had very little in common with that person so you had best end it. With Sasha, he didn't have that sense at all. He enjoyed being with her and he wasn't quite sure why. Sure, she was beautiful but he doubted very seriously that was it. Mulling it over as he walked, he came up with no answers and before he knew it, they had arrived at his hotel.

The hotel boasted tall columns supported the alcove for cars to pull up and deposit both passengers and luggage. Up the burgundy carpeted steps, four massive gilded doors gave way to a well lit lobby. Stopping at the base of the stairs, Garrick turned and faced Sasha, not wanting to lose this opportunity. He was happy to see that no pain seemed to be in Sasha's expression as she regarded him curiously. There was nothing stopping him from finding out what her lips tasted like, save himself. Pulling her into his arms, he slowly lowered his lips to hers giving her plenty of time to avoid him. Garrick couldn't help but smile at the way her shallow quick breaths hinted to her desire and excitement. Scenting her growing arousal, Garrick smiled seductively as he descended.

Covering her incredibly soft lips, Garrick allowed his tongue to slowly lick along the seam in an enticing invitation to open her mouth. When she did, he plunged his tongue into her mouth in a desperate attempt to deepen the kiss. God! He had never tasted anything so sweet, like summer rain and honeydew. Gentling his assault, Garrick slowly twirled his tongue around the inside of her mouth savoring her luscious taste. Electrical currents of arousal flowed a direct route to his groin exciting him further. His hands itched to feel her naked body against his. He fought furiously to keep from grinding his body against her delectable form.

Pulling back from her now kiss swollen lips, Garrick delicately caressed the side of her face. Tracing the line of her lips with his fingers, he forced his body to slow his erratic breathing. He had never wanted anyone so badly. "What time should I expect you tomorrow?"

Sasha felt the world dissipate around her. All that existed was Garrick and his amazing mouth. Sasha had read about kissing in romance novels but had never had the good fortune to experience it until now. That is, if you could consider this a kiss. It felt more like a claiming. All thought evaporated as she wrapped her arms around his neck. Tentatively touching her tongue to his, she felt empowered at his growl of satisfaction and the hard ridge she could feel against her belly. So much so, that she swiveled her tongue with his. She could hear his thoughts clearly projected in her mind. The images she saw there caused her pussy to clench and quiver with need.

All too soon it was over. Garrick was staring deep into her eyes. Sasha fought the haze that surrounded her thoughts. Pulses of pleasure shot to her womb as he caressed her lips. Suddenly, she heard Garrick speak. Quickly processing the question, Sasha thought for a moment. She knew that Nessa and her superiors would be upset to realize that she hadn't completed her mission this evening. However, she didn't care she got to spend some more time with this incredible man who invoked such wonderful feelings in her. "Um... I can meet you any time you wish. It is your vacation after all. Would eight be too early?"

"Eight would be fine. Are you sure you'll be alright going back home?"

Sasha smiled and nodded weakly. Pulling her towards him again, Garrick briefly brushed his lips against hers. "In that case, sweet dreams, exquisite Sasha."

Chapter 4

Entering the agency, Sasha smiled at the night watchman, Danil. He nodded to acknowledge her entrance, and then turned back to his newspaper. Sasha felt weary from the emotional overload of the day. She couldn't summon the desire to use her gift on Garrick even though she knew it was only a matter of time before she had to. Her superiors would not allow her to fail this mission no matter her feelings.

Sasha knew the minute Nessa and Petre saw her on the elevator camera. The comm. link opened to Nessa's agitated voice. "Where have you been Sasha?" Sasha sighed as she realized her night was far from over. Closing her eyes, Sasha answered. "You know where I've been, you did see me twice today already."

Exiting the elevator, Sasha walked straight to Petre's office knowing that both him and Nessa had watched her assent and were waiting for her report. Scenes from her date played through her mind as she walked along the gray linoleum floor and Sasha tried in vain to come up with reasons why her mission had not been completed. Coming to Petre Kerchanko's office door, Sasha stopped to knock only to freeze as her hand hovered inches from the door. What could she say? Not even she completely understood why she had spent the entire day laughing, flirting, talking, eating, and dancing. It had been unlike anything she had ever experienced and Sasha didn't want it to end, but that was foolishness speaking again.

Rapping several times on the door, she decided to brazen it all out as best as she could. After all, what other choice did she have? The sight of Nessa opening the door caused a slight panic. She wasn't ready to justify why she had nothing to give them and time had run out. She couldn't stand out here forever thinking of flimsy excuses, which they wouldn't believe anyway. Director Kerchanko sat at his dark, imposing desk with two subordinates flanking him in uncomfortable wooden chairs. Just what she needed, more witnesses to the humiliation of having an incomplete mission; her first one at that.

It was disconcerting walking into a room of expectant people knowing that they all were waiting to hear a report she didn't have to give. Words deserted her as she stood there staring straight ahead, her eyes fixed on the painting behind Petre's head waiting for him to speak. She knew that excuses were pointless and beneath her.

"Director Kerchanko, before you get mad at her, you need to keep in mind that she is still a young woman who has been greatly sheltered. It would be wrong to harshly judge her especially in light of how attractive her target is. Give her more time, and she will do what is right. I can personally vouch for her." Nessa broke in as she took the chair to Sasha's right.

Sasha really was grateful for Nessa's support, but at the same time humiliated that she would belittle her. Nessa could never truly understand or comprehend that it wasn't her age making it difficult to complete her mission. Nor was it the attractiveness of Garrick Caldwell, potential CIA agent. Rather, it was something fundamentally different. Sasha was only just beginning to understand it, which was strange, considering how much she had been in her own mind. You'd think she would know herself well enough that she wouldn't be this confused. But, that was the problem. Sasha didn't know herself, not truly.

Nessa was partially right. Sasha had been so sheltered that she never had the opportunity and the chance to discover who she really was, and that was the heart of her problem with her mission. It was so easy to pretend to be a normal person with Garrick as he walked and talked with her. And, that kiss, her first kiss had been beyond anything she had ever felt before. Even now, the urge to touch her lips was strong because it she felt branded. It didn't matter how inappropriate it was to be day-dreaming about Garrick's kisses. She did it anyway.

The scraping of a chair on the linoleum floor rudely interrupted her lascivious thoughts causing her eyes to refocus on Petre who was retrieving his hat from the coat rack. "You're playing a very dangerous game young lady. One, I'm not sure you completely understand the consequences and ramifications of what you are doing. I will give you a little leeway to accomplish this mission. But only a little. I will be needing those answers. My superiors as well will want to know why this man is in Moscow and why he has chosen now to be here. Concentrate Sasha. You can find another man that is attractive. We'll even find you one if that is what you want. But you must stay focused on the mission."

Sasha watched Petre gather his belongings and head for the door. What could she really say to him? Although, a rebellious part of her

wanted to scream at his condescension, she was perfectly aware of what was at stake. Just as she was equally aware that Garrick probably wasn't the safest choice for her to discover new experiences with. But, she couldn't help it. When she was with him, something came to life within her that she didn't know had previously existed.

"Nessa, why don't you take Sasha to her room and have a talk with her? Maybe what she needs is the wisdom of a more mature woman." From behind her, Sasha heard the office door opening.

Sasha wasn't eager for that conversation so she was understandably dragging her feet at exiting Petre's office. The walk back to her room was thankfully silent allowing Sasha to think some more about Garrick and tomorrow's date. She guessed she would have to actually get around to completing her mission but surely she could enjoy one more day with him. She wanted to learn more about passion, especially the kind written in the romance novels that Nessa had slipped to her. Everything always worked out in the end for them.

Her hands rose to gently touch her lips. They still seemed to tingle with awareness even after all the time that had passed since the kiss. She felt those curious sensations flow through her again causing the changes in her body that she was now correlating with arousal. On her bed, she slowly realized that Nessa was there, her eyes searching her face and her mind a swirling mixture of concern, fear, and exacerbation.

Nessa sat down in front of her, her hands taking Sasha's into her own "Honey, even if this young man turns out to be a tourist on holiday, this won't end well for the two of you."

"I know," Sasha hated the way they acted as if she was too dense to understand. She was well aware of the futility of it all. After all, her government still had her here in this prison of hers. "Nessa, I'm not stupid. He makes me feel alive and wonderful and other things I haven't yet figured out."

Nessa gave her sad watery smile as images and thoughts of love found and horribly disillusioned crossed through her own mind. "I've been there myself Sasha. I know what you are going through but you have to face facts. If you let this go too far and he turns out to be a spy... how are you going to feel if it's you who are responsible for his imprisonment here? Because that is exactly what will happen if he is a secret agent for the American government, and you know that."

Sasha couldn't look Nessa in the eye. She wasn't even in love with him and yet the thought of him being in a jail cell caused a pang of pain in her chest. That would be her duty to do just as it was his duty to

deceive her. Her mind and heart were at odds and strangely enough she knew that she would somehow survive it. "I won't lie to you Nessa. It would hurt to do that because it hurts now and I'm not exactly heads over heels in love with him. But, those are the risks we both knew coming into this thing."

Fishing out one of the stashed romance novels from her , "He makes me feel the things these girls feel and I don't want it to stop. For once in my life I want to know what it is that everyone else has had the pleasure of discovering for themselves. I'm a big girl Nessa. Relax. I will complete my mission...broken heart or not."

Nessa stood up "I give up. You're going to do what you want to do and...learn the hard, painful way." Nessa placed a hand on her shoulder. "Promise me that you'll talk to me if you find yourself getting in over your head. I don't want anything to happen to you. Please remember that."

Watery eyes made it difficult for Sasha to look up and see Nessa, a woman she wished with all her heart had been her mother. "I will, I promise."

Nessa wrapped her arms around her causing a few tears to slip down Sasha's cheek. "I'll always be here for you and no matter what happens I'll stand by you."

Sasha squeezed the older woman in a tight hug. "Thank you, Nessa."

Words couldn't express how much she appreciated the other woman so Sasha contented herself with a hug. An hour later as Sasha lay in the dark within her bed, her life played through her mind making it difficult for her to get to sleep. Sasha couldn't help but find her thought fitting since she was in the very room that she had spent so much of her life.

It was hard to imagine that at one time this room had been so sparsely furnished and depressingly gray that it had looked like a room one might see in a bad horror film. But, that had changed when Nessa had come into her life. The older woman had made it a point to treat her not only as a little girl but as her own.

Together they had transformed the room into one that any young girl would be proud to have. Later, as she had gotten older, Nessa had come in to help her redecorate time and time again as her tastes changed. In fact, the only opportunities of normalcy she had gotten had come from Nessa but those moments had been few and far between. With thoughts of her stunted childhood, she drifted to sleep.

Chapter 5

Sasha was once again subdued as they walked through the streets of Moscow. Two hours ago, she had met Garrick at his hotel's lobby and together they had eaten breakfast at a nearby restaurant. While inside the eating establishment, he had regaled her with personal but humorous stories of his growing years. A part of him had hoped that she would open up and tell him some personal stories about herself. Sometime during the previous night he had realized that it was more than just lust that he was feeling for her. As foolish as it was to want to cram as much of relationship as he could with a woman he would leave in four days, Garrick couldn't stop himself.

Only, she had never reciprocated with her own personal anecdotes. Throughout the meal, Sasha had laughed and even asked a few questions but never once had she shared her own. Even though he had tried to hide his disappointment, he had a feeling that she must have sensed it. Or maybe he was just reading more into her silence than there really was.

Glancing at her profile, he was mesmerized by the soft beauty of her features. He had to do something to get her to open up to him. Taking a hold of her hand while they walked, he was rewarded with a shy hesitant smile from her lips. Her gaze barely looked away and then she stopped. Following her gaze, he saw a zoo up ahead. Glancing back to her, his question went unasked as he noted the strange expression on her face.

Sasha heard his questioning thought but wasn't ready to answer it yet. The Moscow Zoo lay ahead and it was a perfect example of why she had been unable to share her own personal history with Garrick because she had none really. Her life had been spent in a scientific facility. Unless she wanted to share what she was with him then there was nothing to give, which made her even more depressed. She wanted so badly to experience romance and this only served to highlight why it was unlikely to ever happen. Normal people could give and take while she simply could not.

Although, maybe she could share some small part of it. "My mother took me to this zoo on my eighth birthday."

Actually, it had been Nessa and she had videotaped the zoo. Coming into her room, the older woman had put the tape into a VCR and together they had watched all the animals while Nessa had shared popcorn and cotton candy that she had brought with her from the zoo. It had been one of many things that Nessa had done for her in an effort to make her feel like a normal little girl who wanted so badly to have a parent who loved her. And for some reason, she wanted to share as much of that with Garrick as she could.

"Why don't we go inside and you can tell me all about it?"

"Okay." Together they entered the large zoo via the wrought iron gates molded into lion heads. Once inside the gates, Garrick paid the ticket fee and linked arms with Sasha. She immediately went straight for the cotton candy being sold by a street vender. Handing one to Garrick she smiled as she took a small nibble and moaned in pleasure. "Believe it or not, when my mother took me here, it was the first time I'd ever had this stuff. She laughed at the way I woofed it all down. And then, she walked with me from exhibit to exhibit for hours."

Garrick walked with Sasha down the mulch covered pathway while they ate the candy. He listened to her tell her story and found himself falling in love with her just a little, as he heard her talk about her eighth birthday. She came alive once again as she talked about the monkeys and their antics. A red ball was being tossed from monkey to monkey with ease. Sasha thought it was funny and stood in front of the exhibit for a long time watching them.

Garrick took this time to watch Sasha. She was lovely beyond simple words to describe. Lifting his hand, he couldn't resist the lure of pushing the lock of hair behind her ear, his fingertips caressing her face as he did it. The electricity surged from her to him causing his cock to stir. It was crazy that something so simple could move him like this. Suddenly, Garrick got an idea. A devious one at that.

Dragging her with him, he ignored her questioning look as he began to look for someplace private within this very public place, a feat easier said than done. Finally, he found a nook between a fence and the back of the reptile building. Unable to hold out any longer, he pulled her into his arms as his lips covered hers. Delving into her mouth, a groan escaped from him as he felt her tongue tentatively swirl around his. Her sweetness was a heady feeling driving him to caress her body. He knew that if

they had been in his hotel room they would have gone further because his hands ached to touch her bare skin.

He didn't understand how he could simultaneously be satisfied by cupping her cloth covered breast in his hand while aching to feel it skin to skin. Continuing his exploration, he had an irrational thought that only a blind man could have truly appreciated reading the beauty of her form with just his tactile senses. Even through the fabric of her cotton skirt, the delicate curve of her ass felt so right that his fingers tightened in an effort to keep from pulling up her dress. He had to stop. This wasn't the place for this madness.

Sasha was lost to his touch and his taste. She wanted him to do all the things he thought about doing. As crazy as it was, were they in his hotel room she would have gladly given him her virginity. No, she ached to give it to him. Her body wept in a desire to feel him touch her without clothes. A sob broke from her lips as his wandering mouth nibbled, licked, and sucked spots on her neck and shoulder that she never knew could be so erotic and pleasurable. She ached and wanted him so badly to bare her breasts to his questing mouth and hands.

It was just like the books she had read. She realized as a tear suddenly broke loose from her eye to slide down her cheek. Nothing good could come from this. More tears welled up and fell because she could see herself falling in love with him and yet it would be the height of all folly to let it happen. Otherwise, betraying the man she feared was her soul mate would not only be an unthinkable thing but an unpardonable offense against love.

Garrick felt something wet hit his cheek as he attempted to devour her scent and her arousal. Glancing up at her face, he froze at the tears slipping down her cheeks. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to maul you... actually that's not exactly true. I did want to but I would've never done that if you weren't willing."

She wiped at her tears with the back of her hand. "No, that's not it. I'm crying because you're making me feel so... happy. I just don't know how to feel."

That was a first for him. Pulling back, he decided that it would be best if he gave her more time to adjust to this, to him. He would be on a plane in five days time and the last thing he wanted to do was be responsible for breaking her heart. She was the kind of girl you brought home to mama. Only, he wasn't the kind of guy to bring the future Mrs. home for mama's approval. His choices had nixed that.

Releasing her from his embrace, he led her back to where people meandered around looking at the various animals within the menagerie. Suddenly, a howl from both the past and present froze him in his tracks. Ahead of them Siberian wolves circled along the perimeter of their cage, their gaze intent on Garrick. It brought back an unpleasant memory that he kept suppressed from Sasha. Dragging Sasha along with him, he moved away from the exhibit and towards a different exhibit.

Sasha was confused. Garrick's thoughts were a distorted collage of mental imagery she couldn't make sense of. Running in the woods, away or to something she didn't know. Finally, he slowed down enough to give her a half smile. "Sorry, I've had a problem with wolves since I was a teenager."

"That's okay, I understand." And she really did. Who didn't become uncomfortable around things that reminded them of nightmares? Perhaps the spy thing wasn't a possibility with Garrick. Sasha didn't think that spies would shy away from things that scared them. She couldn't help but hope that was the case because a huge part of her wanted him to not be one. Then there might just be a possibility that she wouldn't have to turn him in. They'd be able to have a real relationship. Although maybe she was being a little unrealistic there. He was an American, after all. He lived an entire ocean away.

"Are those things hedgehogs?"

Garrick's question brought Sasha from her wandering thoughts back to the exhibit they had walked into and the small pointed nosed creatures. Glancing at the sign in Russian, Sasha read aloud to Garrick.

"The sign says they are tenrecs and come from Madagascar. The Moscow Zoo received them in 2000. So they are just three years old. This other part of the sign says that they produced an offspring last summer. I have never seen a hedgehog so you must tell me, do they look like them?"

"I've only seen a few on television specials, but my buddies and I played the video game when I was in the Marines."

"The video game? What kind of game is played with small animals?"

Shocked to know Sasha had never heard of video games, Garrick decided to do something about the grave injustice. "The video game is animated. There are no real animals in it. What if tomorrow I find an arcade place where I can show you first hand? How does that sound? If you're free that is."

Sasha smiled. Garrick was so thoughtful. He had been thinking he wanted her to experience everything. Some of that everything was quite

steamy in nature but Sasha tried to block that part out lest she lose all focus. "Actually, I'd love that. Do you know where we could go?"

"There were a stack of brochures in my hotel room for shopping experiences. I could always look there first. If not, there are phone books to use or I could just ask the concierge service."

Sasha had not thought about any of those things, but then again, she'd never stayed at a hotel. Not wanting to show her ignorance, Sasha refrained from asking about a concierge. She had no clue what that might be. Not delving too deeply into Garrick's thoughts, she tried to skim just basic information. She knew he was going somewhere this afternoon before he met up with her tomorrow. She just hadn't looked deep enough to find out where. She wasn't ready for this to be over with. Too many experiences with Garrick were turning out to be firsts and Sasha was desperately tempted to complete that final 'first' before he had to leave Moscow.

"Hey, why don't we head back Sasha. You're looking a bit sun burned. While you rest up, I'll see what I can find out for our date tomorrow." Garrick would rather spend the rest of the day with her but he had some business to attend to before he could take her out and have some fun.

"Sure, what time would you like to meet tomorrow? What do you wear to play video games?"

Watching the twinkle in her eye, Garrick amused himself with the thought of her dressing up to play video games. She really was sexy with all of her innocence. Strange how he had previously gone for women who were experienced in life but now found himself clearly enamored by one so unsullied.

"You don't wear anything. Well..." He would love to see her wearing nothing but he didn't think she was the type of girl to go that far without a little more effort on the guy's part. "What I meant is that you don't dress up. Anything casual will work. An arcade isn't anything special. Why don't we head back and I'll check out the information before we decide what time to meet tomorrow. Are you hungry? We could stop somewhere and grab lunch before you leave?"

"Yeah, I am kind of hungry."

Chapter 6

Sasha paused outside the hotel to stare at her reflection for the umpteenth time this evening and debated whether the outfit she was wearing was too provocative or not. The low cut halter top and curve hugging jeans had drawn more than a few sets of eyes to her body as she journeyed here from headquarters. Looks that she had appreciated but now realized that the lust filled stares had done nothing to spark her own like Garrick's did. That once again had Sasha wondering if what she felt for Garrick was more than just simple lust. If it wasn't, what was it?

Well, she wasn't likely to figure that out anytime too soon as she had only known him for three days now, which was why she was hoping that the outfit she was wearing would accomplish its mission. The tight low rise jeans and the tons of cleavage she was showing should keep Garrick's mind on her and not anything she'd have to report to her superiors. It was wrong but she really needed to keep seeing Garrick, at least until she knew what it was that she was feeling for him. Even though she knew it was foolish, Sasha had resolved herself to give it a couple more days because she needed this time to figure everything out. The problem was that she was risking a great deal to prolong this any longer than she had already done so.

Entering the hotel by the grand front entrance, Sasha's eyes swept the lobby looking for him. The floor was nearly packed with people either coming, going or waiting in the assorted chairs and couches situated on a red plush carpet. Large plants flanked each conversation area. That was when she saw him. Garrick's eyes met hers from the plaid wing backed chair he sat in. His eyes devoured her body with a fierce intensity that she was becoming to love while his mind flashed with half a dozen fantasies of not only what he wanted to do to her but where he would like to be doing them at. A delicious throb and hum coursed through her nipples and ended deliciously between her thighs. Sasha bit back a small moan as she found herself thinking about his favorite fantasy. He wanted to see her play with herself in a wanton display meant solely for him. Why was she so tempted to give him his fantasy?

Garrick really wanted to eat her up in the most salacious way. His jeans were pinching his favorite part and the urge to whip it out reminded him that he wanted to do a whole lot more than just eat her up. He could already picture in his mind's eye how she would feel as he thrust into her over and over again. He could safely say that he had never had such an intense feeling about anyone before. "I just called a cab to meet us outside." He called out in way of a greeting.

A part of Garrick would rather try talking her into following him back upstairs but at the same time he wanted to see her face light up as he introduced her to new experiences. In which case, either option would work. "There is an arcade not too far away from here in a shopping center. We can eat first and then go to the arcade."

"Okay, that sounds fine." Sasha's eyes didn't meet his and a becoming little blush was back on her cheeks again.

Taking her by the arm, they made their way towards the doors. Exiting the hotel, Garrick wondered what the source of this uncomfortable silence was. It seemed that Sasha had a way of moving from hot to cold and back again in the space of a few moments.

Opening the cab door so that Sasha could climb inside, Garrick found his eyes riveted on her tempting backside. The flared hips and full round cheeks of her derriere made it the finest he had ever seen. But, what really got him going was the thong underwear prominently on display as her jeans hung low on her pelvis. His fingers ached to fondle her behind as she climbed into the taxi. He sometimes wondered if all this exposure to her delectable body was going to give him a case of permanent erection.

Sasha couldn't stop the smile that broke out across her face at his silly musings. She was secretly flattered by his acute arousal over her body. She could also completely sympathize with him because she had already started to think that she would never be able to wear underwear again without them becoming wet.

Laying her head on Garrick's shoulder, she wished she could talk about those moments of disquiet with him. Sasha knew the source. The problem was that the moment she revealed it to him then she would have to confess who she was and why she had approached him in the first place. To put it simply, both of them wanted to take this attraction to a higher level only to do so would mean that they would have to come completely clean with one another. Something Sasha just could not do.

Silence reigned as the cab pulled up to the Okhotny Ryad Trade Complex. Sasha looked at the large building. She had seen it a few days ago

across the street when she had 'bumped' into Garrick at the Kremlin. While she had heard of the mega shopping center, she had never actually been in it before.

"Wow, it's pretty big. I think the flyer said it had 120 arcade games. I think that's more than enough for you to gain the experience." It had to be the largest mall that Garrick had ever seen. The shopping complex was three stories high with a large central court on the main floor. Having spent the majority of his life in small rural towns, he wasn't completely immune to the effect of mega shopping malls and strangely enough the sight of it seemed familiar to him. "Have you ever been here before?" probably a silly question since she lived here but it was out before he could stop himself.

"No, I've been by it a few times but I've never actually gone inside."

That was strange. You'd think she'd been to everything since she lived in the city. Garrick couldn't help but observe that in many ways her country seemed new and different to her. Of course, maybe he was just imagining it. Locals didn't always spend a great deal of time cruising the tourist traps. It seemed logical to him that she would have at least have visited the places that young people so often spend most of their time in. Although, maybe she was just different than her peers? It wasn't like he could be stereotyped as the average American, far from it in fact. "How about that? Another first we're sharing."

Sasha was at a loss. How could she explain the fact she'd never been anywhere in the city? She was surprised Garrick hadn't come right out and asked her yet. Some part of her was dying to tell him what all she was. That way, some other soul would truly know her and want to spend time with her regardless of her abilities or job title. "Amazing how that works huh?"

Sasha allowed Garrick to pay for the cab and escort her into the grandest set of shops she had ever seen. "Wow, look a racetrack!" Sasha blurted out before she could stop herself. That wasn't very ladylike at all to be screaming like a little child. Adrenaline had just rushed into her system at the new and amazing things. Being at the facility Sasha had never witnessed a real race car let alone driven a small one herself. This was part of her reluctance when it came to finishing her assignment. Even though she wanted to prove herself to Petre and Nessa, she was thoroughly enjoying her time with Garrick. She had been wondering if this is how 'normal' people felt all the time. The fierce attraction she had for him only seemed to intensify when she caught his aroused thoughts.

Trying to stifle a laugh, Garrick smiled at Sasha's enthusiasm. Maybe he wasn't imagining that she was different from other people her age. It was as if the curiosity and excitement of a child was wrapped up in a deliciously, provocative package. The thought of unwrapping that luscious package had Garrick trying to hide his body's reaction from Sasha. "Would you like to drive the car first? We could start with that and then do the arcade and dinner if you like."

"Really? That would be great. Do you really have to know how to drive a car in order to drive one of these? I'm afraid I don't have a license."

"I'm pretty sure you don't need a license but since the cars are built for two do you want to ride with me first and then see if you want to drive one yourself?" The thought of her body pressed against his in the small seat of the car had him aching to feel her curves. Sasha nearly dragged Garrick along in her haste to get inside the car. Sliding in next to her, Garrick fought hard to stifle the moan of pleasure as her petite body molded itself to his. The seats were really small for which Garrick was even now thanking God for.

Garrick quickly started the small vehicle and hit the gas. This was one experience he wanted Sasha to remember for the rest of her life. Slamming his foot on the pedal as far as it would go, the small car leapt into action with squealing tires. Barely missing the track barrier, Garrick maneuvered the race car around the looping track with ease. At one sharp turn, Sasha grabbed onto Garrick's leg to support herself.

A blush bloomed on Sasha's cheeks as she realized just where she had her hand on Garrick's leg. Quite close to the top of his thigh, she could feel his jeans strain to contain him. A flush of arousal went through her body at the thought of what lay so close beneath the denim. Sasha wanted to be bold. She knew they wouldn't be together long. In a rash decision Sasha moved her hand high to cover his denim encased erection.

The car swerved on the track just as Sasha moved her palm slowly back and forth along the hard ridge. A small seductive smile slid onto her face as she saw his surprise and appreciation. Sasha suppressed a giggle at the lascivious thoughts running through Garrick's head. Some of the things he had been thinking Sasha thought might be physically impossible. However, she was beginning to think she just might be willing to try.

As the car slowed down, Garrick could barely contain his excitement. In the short time he had been with Sasha she had never initiated any of

the physical aspects of the relationship. Hope bloomed in his heart. Maybe he could experience a more special part of Russia before he had to leave. Garrick mentally scolded himself. He couldn't believe he had just entertained a thought akin to an eighteen year old boy's fantasy. However much he wanted to feast upon Sasha's delectable body, Garrick could tell she was innocent. Every move she had made until now had proved that. Somewhere between the cab and now Sasha had completed a 180 degree change. From uncomfortable silences to obvious groping, Garrick was lost. What was he supposed to think now?

The remainder of the evening was spent playing each one of those 120 arcade games at least once as well as dinner at a kid's café located near the racetrack. Garrick had watched in amazement as Sasha came alive with each video game they had played. Wonder alighted her eyes as she went from game to game. By the end of the evening, Garrick was pretty sure any game with racing was among Sasha's favorites while she was eerily precise with each shooting game. As they waited for the cab for the return trip to his hotel, Garrick decided to go for it.

"Sasha, would you like to come up to my room for some to drink before you go? It isn't very late and I'd really like to spend more time with you."

Drawing a steadying breath, Sasha fought for an answer. Should she go and possibly spend all night with him? Or should she refuse and not know what would have or would not have occurred?

"I'd love to Garrick. However, I cannot stay extremely long. It has been a long day and I really must catch up on my laundry." Sasha knew it for the lame excuse it was, however she just had to have some excuse. While a large part of her wanted nothing more than to experience all the pleasure she knew Garrick wanted to give her, another more hidden part was scared witless. She had only dated a few times previously and the thoughts she picked up from those men made her feel nasty. Garrick's thoughts however, made her feel tingly and needy; for what she wasn't sure.

"In that case, let's grab the cab. After you." Garrick escorted Sasha into the waiting cab and gave the directions to the hotel. A second uncomfortable silence ensued. However, this time Garrick knew the silence was one of anticipation and anxiousness. He played over the evening in his mind. Except for the silent cab ride on the way to the shopping complex, Sasha had had a good time. Her excitement and exuberance had shown all evening. He was unsure of what she expected from him tonight but he promised himself that he would only go as far as she allowed him. Of

course, he hoped she would allow him many of the fantasies he had been having over the past few days. It seemed all he could think about was Sasha and her incredible body. He also appreciated her mind and had an incredible time with her no matter the occasion but his dreams were not about conversations unless you count asking her to strip so he could worship her body.

“So...what did you think of the arcade? Did you find a favorite game?”

“Well, those racing games were really fun. They made you feel like you were really driving. For me, that is the best experience. I’ve never been allowed to drive before so that was great!”

“Why weren’t you allowed to drive? Were your parents that worried?”

Sasha immediately realized her mistake. Wincing slightly before she could catch herself, Sasha quickly thought of something to tell Garrick. “Actually, my mother is a perpetual worrier. She just has this insane notion that something terrible might happen to me in the city. Something about crazy drivers...”

“I’ve had a few buddies who had overprotective mothers before. Luckily mine wasn’t like that but having seen a few of my friends teased mercilessly about being mama’s boys. I kind of know where you’re coming from”

Garrick finally felt like he was finding something out about his elusive Russian fling. He wondered what else she might say before this night was over.

Sasha couldn’t believe she’d actually slipped and said that. She had never said anything she shouldn’t before. Of course this was her first mission all by herself. Which meant, she was already messing it up. For the umpteenth time this evening Sasha was glad they hadn’t decided to wire her. That had been one of the threats from Petre if she didn’t find out any information soon, but so far she had convinced him otherwise. Looking out the window, Sasha saw many things for the first time. The neon lights blurred as the cab sped through the city. The closer she got to the hotel, the more anxious she felt. She was pretty sure she would refrain from sleeping with him, she hoped. But just how far she was willing to go she wasn’t sure.

Paying the cab driver, the pair quickly made it through the lobby and into the elevator. Garrick tentatively held Sasha’s hand as the elevator ascended to the fourth floor. The silence allowed each of them to think about what lie ahead once they reached his room. Garrick felt his body

harden at the thought of Sasha alone in his room. He had spent the last few nights agonizing in his bed, wishing Sasha was there to warm it. Now that could be a real possibility. Garrick tried hard to calm his body before Sasha noticed. The last thing he wanted to do was scare her off.

Chapter 7

Garrick closed the door after ushering Sasha in with a gentle touch upon her back. He could tell she had become tense from the tight muscles under his palm. Her gaze hesitantly met his as she walked further into the room. A plush carpet of burgundy met her feet. Sasha felt her sandals sink into the thick floor covering. Quickly scanning the room, Sasha noticed everything was top of the line elegant. The room had a small sitting area with two chairs, a coffee table, and a burgundy striped loveseat, all situated next to a large window covered in a golden roman shade. On the coffee table, was a small fm radio/ c.d. player, a fake fern and a few coasters. Next to the sitting area was a bar with a built in sink. Two bar stools flanked the counter surrounding the sink. Above it was a rectangular gilded mirror, which reflected a nicely framed print of the Kremlin. Sasha tried hard to steer her vision away from the remainder of the room. Unfortunately the thoughts coming from Garrick all involved the intricately carved bed. Sasha found her gaze wandering over the magnificent silk comforter and soft downy pillows. This hotel room was quite possibly, no definitely worth more than her small set of rooms at the agency.

Sasha could tell Garrick was waiting for her to either make a second move towards him or bolt. His thoughts were confusing and conflicted. On one hand he wanted to give her unmentionable pleasure and take it in return. On the other hand he wanted to savor and treasure her for the precious woman she was. Sasha watched as Garrick sauntered to the bar and produced two glasses from beneath it. She stared as the muscles ripple in his arms as he reached behind him for the small bottles of alcohol. Pouring a single shot from a whiskey bottle, Garrick turned to the small built in refrigerator and retrieved a two liter bottle of cola. The last thing he wanted to do was make her drunk. Sasha knew from his thoughts he was only trying to relax her and calm her nerves.

Garrick placed his glass on the coffee table and handed Sasha hers. "Would you like to sit down on the couch with me? I promise not to

bite." A salacious smile crossed Garrick's lips. He'd like to bite her alright.

A small giggle escaped Sasha's lips as she sat next to Garrick on the sofa. The luxurious taupe leather reminded her of a picture Nessa had shown her of beaches. She felt the cool leather slide across her bare skin between her low slung jeans and the base of her shirt. "This is a really nice room. I expected an older hotel like this to have furnishings that were of a similar age but these seem to be brand new." Sasha knew that sounded ridiculous, however with her mind playing catch up to her traitorous body, she was at a loss to string coherent words together.

Garrick watched as she sat down on the far end of the couch with the drink he fixed her in her lap. "You know, I'm glad you decided to spend more time with me. Never have I enjoyed someone's company as much as you. There just seems to be something about you. That sounds strange and insincere doesn't it?"

"Oh no! Not at all. I can really sympathize, actually. I've been trying to figure out what is going on myself. I like being in your company as well." Sasha sighed in relief. For a moment, she thought he had been setting her up for a trap... inviting her to the hotel room only to ravish her without a care for her wishes. Man, she really had to tell Nessa to restrict her romance reading. That only happened in fantasy, not in real life. Or at least not to Sasha.

Garrick shifted closer to Sasha so that their legs were barely touching. He so badly wanted to see if her body was as tantalizingly erotic as he believed it was underneath her clothes. His thoughts turned to revealing that luscious body as his eyes wandered over it. The curve of her small halter showed the swell of her creamy breasts encased in a lacy bra. The velvety expanse of her mid-section was slightly exposed above the curve hugging jeans that molded to her body. How he'd love to be those jeans. Better yet, how he'd love her out of them.

Sasha took a big gulp of the whiskey. Garrick's thoughts had her tied up in knots. And now that she was here, she wasn't sure if she had thought this completely through enough. Remaining here would almost guarantee that Garrick would test how far he could go before she stopped him. But then again, if she didn't stay, she would have to wait an indeterminable time before someone else interested her like Garrick. Interrupting her thoughts, she heard Garrick speak to her.

"Sasha? Are you all right?"

"Oh... yes, I'm fine. I just...well, that is, I've never done something like this."

Garrick pondered her words. He wasn't sure if she was looking for reassurance or if she was just talking out of nervousness. If her other actions hadn't shown him her innocence, this surely did. For a moments time Garrick felt a twinge of guilt. Was he really trying to steal a virgin's innocence? Garrick looked at Sasha once again. Yes, he was. Even if it made him a bastard for it, he really wanted her. He was pretty sure once wouldn't be enough either.

Sasha set the drink down and shifted to face Garrick hoping, wanting, and praying that he would take the next step before she chickened out again. She had waited long enough to experience the physical expressions of attraction, lust, and desire and she didn't want to miss out on this chance. Of course, she was also scared witless. Her job was to ferret out his motives for being in Russia and here she was wishing he'd seduce her. What kind of idiot did that? If this got out of hand, she could be in big trouble with Nessa and Petre. Honestly, she had no idea what would happen, but after last night's lecture she was sure it would be bad.

Garrick saw her turn toward him and realized she was inviting his affections. He took that invitation and decided to run with it. Caressing her cheek, he leaned towards her until their lips brushed with the lightest of kisses. When he heard her moan of acceptance he kissed her again. This time he plundered her mouth with a forceful kiss. His tongue ran across the seam of her lips encouraging them open. Immediately she allowed him entrance and took his kiss deeper. It was all he could do to keep from her clothes off. Pulling back slightly to disengage from the kiss, Garrick peered into the eyes. Her lips were moist and inflamed the evidence of his passion apparent. Garrick leaned forward to run his finger over her kiss-swollen lips.

Shivering at his touch, Sasha closed her eyes and tried to slow her breathing. This had only been her second kiss. She had never allowed the other few men she had dated to come near her. Their thoughts had disgusted her and turned her stomach. The idea of Garrick's touch however had her nipples tightening and her womb clenching in anticipation of things she had only read about.

Sasha knew she should stop this before she regretted anything but she just couldn't force herself to do it. She opened her eyes and took in all that was Garrick; from his short russet hair to his deep as the ocean blue eyes. His short sleeved, red polo accentuated his muscular form. His jeans were dark and fit well enough to showcase his manly thighs. At this exact moment they were pulled taut by straining erection. Sasha had

a sudden urge to unzip his jeans and find out more about that part of him. Blushing furiously at her own devious thoughts, she quickly looked away.

Garrick watched her as she obviously looked her fill. He thought it was very sexy the way her eyes darted over his form to linger on his erection. It was already rock hard and throbbing for release. Garrick stifled a moan as she licked her lips and blushed. He could tell she was embarrassed. Seeing her reluctance to make a move towards him, he tried to give her back some control of the situation. Taking a deep calming breath, Garrick spoke. "What type of music do you listen to? I can turn on the radio if you'd like."

"I listen to a little bit of everything. It usually depends on my mood."

"Well, in that case, I'll start looking and you tell me if we find something you like." Garrick said as he leaned towards the coffee table to turn on the radio. Static immediately filled the room.

"I'm like that too although I tend to listen to more alternative and hard rock than anything else."

It was killing Garrick to back off the way he had but he didn't want Sasha to think he was pressuring her into having sex with him. He wanted to make sure that any decision she made would be made free of coercion. How strange to feel this way when before meeting Sasha he wouldn't have thought twice about whether the woman would feel anything after their time together. His dick on the other hand was thinking something all together different. The feel of her mouth had been incredible. Even through the layer of clothing her body had been pure torture. He could see her nipples harden to tight little points. All he could think about was what she must look and feel like without any clothes.

"Ooh...turn that back. That's Nu Virgos, I love them. I have their c.d. Half of the c.d. is in English too."

Sasha looked as though she was going to burst from excitement. Turning the radio dial back, Garrick listened to the music. It had a nice beat but unfortunately he didn't understand half of what was being said. He watched as Sasha swayed in her seat while singing along. Her voice was sultry, sweet, and very enticing; but that was only part of what was making him harder than he'd ever been before. The way Sasha moved her hips to the music was sexier than any pop princess could ever hope to be.

Garrick fought hard the temptation to reach over and claim her as his own. He'd been dying to taste her since he'd first laid eyes on her. Now that he'd had a small taste, it was only fueling the desire to imprint her

as his forever. Sadly, Garrick knew that shouldn't happen. He'd only be gone in a few days, never to return to Russia, if he was lucky. For a split moment he had a crazy thought. He could take Sasha with him. Mentally shaking himself, Garrick realized that was stupid. Not only did he know practically nothing about her, he also couldn't share his life with anyone nor take her from her country. His life just wasn't set up to include anyone else. Garrick watched as the song ended and Sasha stopped singing. Her skin almost glowed she had enjoyed herself so much.

Sasha loved the sound of the music. She always felt so free when she was singing along with the songs. It had been one of the few things Petre and the others had allowed her to have. In the office, she had driven them crazy until they had relented and allowed her to have music, although they had censored what music she could have until she had turned 18.

As she stopped singing and looked back at Garrick, Sasha realized one thing: she was happy. For the first time she felt joyful. Here was a gorgeous specimen of a man whose one desire was to make love to her. She knew it was a large step to take but she didn't think she could go there just yet. "Garrick, I need to be completely honest with you. I'm a virgin... and I'm not ready to do that with you yet."

Garrick smiled at her innocent remark. He had thought all along she was inexperienced. "That's okay. I'm not going to force myself on you. We can take this as slow as you want."

Sasha hesitated unsure of what to do or even what she wanted to do. "I don't want to leave yet." The problem was she didn't know where that left her.

Garrick enfolded her into his arms. "You don't have to leave Sasha. You can stay as long as you like."

Sasha closed her eyes and took a deep breath enjoying the sensation of his warmth. She felt moisture pooling in her eyes at the tender and respectful way that he was treating her. "Thank you."

Garrick rubbed her back. "Hey, why don't we watch a movie? There's a television above the bar. I'll even let you pick. How does that sound?"

Leaning forward, Sasha grinned. "Really? That sounds great. I've seen most of the movies that have come out on DVD but I'm sure something will be on that sounds good. Can I have the remote too?" Sasha asked with a smirk. She had heard from some of the married scientists at FSB that men were remote hogs.

Suddenly, Garrick stood up and stretched his arms over his head revealing a swatch of muscles exposed from the bottom of his polo shirt. A

slow, seductive smile crept across his lips as he moved to the nightstand drawer next to the bed. "You know, sharing the remote is a very intimate thing. I'm not sure I'm ready for that step yet. It is very major." Garrick could barely contain his laughter as he turned and saw the confused look appear on Sasha's face.

Bringing the remote back to the couch, he handed it to Sasha. "You do realize I was just kidding with you right? But even so, I think I can take that leap of faith and entrust you with the honored man scepter."

Relief flooded Sasha's face. For a moment, she had thought Garrick was serious. She had never heard that the ownership of the remote could be such a serious topic. "I know you're kidding now and I'm glad you have that much faith in me. Although you might want to take that faith back depending on what movie I find. What are you up for?"

Sagging back onto the couch, Garrick laughed. "We'll see if you can keep the faith. For now, I don't care. I like all the action movies although they totally misrepresent all the facts. Just see what's on I guess."

"Okay." Finding the power button on the unfamiliar remote, Sasha pressed it and watched the large television come to life. It was currently on the local Moscow news channel, in Russian of course. Tempted to watch the weather, Sasha quickly changed the channel until she found the television guide channel. As the listings scrolled by, Sasha pondered her current feelings. She felt-well...content. It was strange to feel so comfortable- and yet- not know whether this man was a spy for a different country. Maybe it was her youth speaking, but frankly, she found she really didn't care. It's not like she could be fired. Ha! Where would she go? She was sure it wasn't every day that the top secret Russian telepath was let go for insubordination. Returning her thoughts to the task of finding a suitable movie, Sasha watched the screen.

"What about this one? It's just starting. The description says it's about a rogue police officer bent on bringing a killer to justice for a crime committed years ago. Sounds like your kind of movie yes? I'm not sure if it is being played in English but I can access subtitles if you want."

"Sure, sounds fine. Do you want me to ring room service? We can order snacks and junk food."

"Actually, that sounds great! Do you think they have chocolate? I'm partial to American chocolate though, I love those Hershey bars." Sasha leaned down to roll up her jeans. Gaining access to her knee high boots, she unzipped them and dropped them to the floor. Her feet flexed and stretched from their cramped position to curl under and she pulled her knees up onto the couch.

Garrick picked up the phone next to the couch and made the room service call. By the time the chocolate and chips arrived from room service, the movie was in full swing. Sasha was enjoying herself and had decided to stay for the sequel coming on next. She lay in the bed- under the covers- just where he wanted her. Unfortunately, fate was a fickle lady and Sasha was engrossed in the movie and not the least bit interested in the raging hard on Garrick had been dealing with all evening.

Chapter 8

Warmth covered her body in a cocoon of comfort. In a balmy state of relaxation. Cracking open an eye, Sasha noticed two things: one, that it was brighter than usual and two, her room didn't have beige and burgundy wallpaper. As these two thoughts registered in her sluggish mind, her body began a languid stretch from the top of her head to the soles of her feet. Regrettably, the stretch was impeded by that searing insulate situated next to her on the bed. Sasha opened both eyes and blinked rapidly at the bright sunlight streaming in from the balcony doors.

Balcony doors? Suddenly everything came back in a rush to a sleep clogged brain. Movies with Garrick in his hotel room. Room service and chocolate. Climbing into bed. She had never left! Panic ensued as Sasha realized the pleasant warmth surrounding her was not her down comforter but a large man still sleeping soundly with his leg thrown over hers and an arm wrapped around her waist. Sasha shrieked in shock and frantically fought to free herself from under his sleepy clutches.

"No, let go. I must... help, please. I need to...just, I can't breathe."

Stirred by a scream, Garrick tightened his grip on the wiggling pillow before he realized it wasn't his pillow. "Sasha, Sasha. Calm down. What's wrong? Sweetheart, it's alright. It's me, Garrick. Honey, I've got you. You're safe." Removing his arm from its resting place on her mid-section, he began to rub her back in soothing strokes. Realizing it was a panic attack, Garrick removed his leg from Sasha's.

Even with his gentle words and reassurances, Sasha bolted. Throwing the blanket off of her now liberated body, she leapt out of bed and ran to the nearest door and slammed it shut. Quickly turning the lock, she grasped the edges of the sink and took large, steadying breaths. Her sleep muddled brain began to clear as she stared into the vanity mirror. Taking stock of the situation, Sasha realized she was still fully clothed except for her boots. She remembered the first movie ending and her back hurting. Garrick suggesting she stretch out on the bed for the sequel. Sasha remembered a few things from the sequel but not the ending. She must have fallen asleep watching the movie and slept all night. As

her breathing steadied and her heart rate returned to normal, she plopped down on the edge of the massive garden tub to contemplate her current situation.

She was supposed to have checked in by midnight and been home no later than 12:30 a.m. Obviously, she was way past that checkpoint. Nessa would be crazy with worry. For all her job of her handler, she was still a mother figure and put her heart and soul into ensuring Sasha's safety. Petre would be chomping at the bit for information. Was it just yesterday that he had threatened to wire her or pull her off the mission? All the days seemed to run together. She needed to get to her cell phone to see what time it was and call Nessa. How could she make the call in front of Garrick? She couldn't. She'd have to wait to call Nessa until she was away from Garrick. Thinking of Garrick again, she realized she had abruptly left him in her haste to clear her mind.

Leaving the bathroom, Sasha's half smile was hesitant. "I'm sorry I freaked out on you like that. But, I've never been out all night. My mother is bound to be worried."

Turning at the sound of Sasha's voice, Garrick quickly thought about her comment. How old was she? Garrick stiffened as he tried to push away the overwhelming concern that he could potentially be seeing an underage girl. His eyes widened as he thought about the alcohol they had both ingested recently. He was tempted to ask to see her I.D. but after a quick deliberation thought that might be considered rude. Oh God, her mother would think they had slept together last night. How could he have been so stupid to not think about her age first? "Sasha, if you don't mind me asking, how old are you? I just want to make sure."

Giggling at the insane remarks running through Garrick's mind, Sasha was quick to reply. "I'm nineteen years old, it's alright. I'm not what you Americans would consider jailbait. If you don't mind though, I need to check my cell phone."

Sagging in relief, Garrick felt the weight of his thoughts lift. He had been so immediately attracted to her that he really hadn't thought about what her actual age might have been. He could tell by her response that she had understood his concern immediately. Garrick still couldn't understand why he hadn't thought about that sooner. He had just been so in lust, he couldn't see through the haze. Even now, her hair all sleep tossed and her shirt all wrinkled, he wanted nothing more than to throw her on the bed and worship her body until neither one of them could move.

Rifling through her purse, Sasha found her cell phone at the bottom buried under her wallet. Turned off, the phone had not been able to ring all evening. She tried to think back to when she could have possibly shut it off. It was then Sasha recalled her decision to shut out the outside world, and FSB, before she had met up with Garrick for their date. Turning the phone back on, Sasha waited for it to power up and find her network. Immediately she noted the time was already 9:38 a.m. Normally by now, she and Nessa would have eaten breakfast, gone over the daily agenda and reviewed any case notes from the previous evening. Now that she thought about it, her life was pretty boring for someone supposedly a spy. Why had she not realized the monotony of her existence?

As the phone registered with the network provider the message light blinked on. Of course she'd have a message. She'd missed her check in time and curfew. Even though Nessa really wasn't her mother, she'd be sure to lay into her she got back. She could just hear the speech now – something about responsibility and some such nonsense.

"Garrick, do you mind if I check my messages really quickly? I promise to hurry."

"Sure. Whatever you need. I'm sorry I kept you all night if it's going to cause you any trouble. Of course, I'm not really sorry you stayed. It was very nice to wake up nice and warm with a beautiful woman in my bed – albeit a little deafer for the screaming experience. Take whatever time you need."

"Thanks." Sasha sat on the bed and folded one leg underneath of herself. Dialing her voicemail, she typed in her password and waited as the automated voice gave the date and time of her first message.

"First message, Thursday, September 5th, 12:14 a.m. from phone number 8-265-59-30: Sasha it's me Nessa. You didn't call me to check in. Where are you and why is your phone off? Call me as soon as you get this."

"Second message, Thursday, September 5th, 12:56 a.m. from phone number 8-265-59-30: Sasha, you haven't called. You know curfew is at 12:30. Petre has already been down here looking for you. I made up some excuse that you were simply running late and would be here any minute. You better get your ass home now before Petre sends out a search party or something. Just hurry!"

"Third message, Thursday, September 5th, 3:36 a.m. from phone number 8-265-59-30: Oh my God Sasha! I can't cover for you anymore. Petre

has it figured out. You're not HERE! Where the Hell are you? You know you're not the only whose ass is on the line! You better call me."

"Fourth message, Thursday, September 5th, 7:48 a.m. from phone number 8-265-59-30: Alright Sasha! Dr. Chikachev and Dr. Anchova are already in Petre's office waiting for you. They've sent a team to watch the target's hotel for movement. You'd better be home or we're both in deep water. Petre wants to pull you from the case. You'd better show yourself soon."

Sasha deleted the last of the four messages. So she'd royally messed up. At this point it sounded as though she'd be off the case the moment she got back anyway. What's another few hours? Nessa would forgive her for anything and Petre – well, he'd just get over it too. Really, would she be fired? No. With her mind made up, Sasha turned her phone off again, deposited it in her purse, and unfolded herself from the bed. A shiver of appreciation rippled across her body as Garrick walked towards her. The look of concern on his face gave Sasha's heart a jump-start. Why did he have to be so compassionate? If he just didn't feel so right, she'd have had this over with the first day and be at home now. Back to her boring schedules and multitudes of business meetings. Why did FSB think she'd love to sit in on every meeting and be the human lie detector? It was all she could do to keep herself awake during those mind-numbing gatherings.

Easing himself from the couch, Garrick stalked towards Sasha as a lion does his prey. He was intent on kissing those lips she had just been biting in worry. Whatever it was, he wanted to fix it so she could stay with him. He wasn't anywhere near done with her yet. When he had heard her cell phone chime as she shut it off again, he had hoped that was a divine sign that she was feeling some of the tension in the room as well. His cock sure had. He'd been standing at attention since the moment he laid eyes on her in front of the Kremlin.

Snaking an arm around her waist, he pulled her towards him. Within seconds, his lips slanted over hers in a searing proclamation of his desire. Deepening the kiss, Sasha moaned as she buried her hand in his cropped hair. He trailed his free hand around to grip her ass and bring her flush to his body. His erection pulsed between them, an unspoken demand all his own. Sasha's other hand roamed Garrick's back, frantically searching for what he didn't know – didn't care. Nibbling on her lip, he soothed it with his tongue before delving deeper again to taste her. A sweet ambrosia filled his senses. She was like sunshine and cupcakes all wrapped into one fascinating little package.

He could feel her begin to pull away from him to gasp for air. Garrick released her gently and took a steady step back. She had just freaked out minutes before and now he was attacking her. God only knew how many more ways he could screw this up. A sheepish grin spread across Garrick's face.

"I...uh, well... good morning?"

"Yeah... great morning. I'm sorry Garrick – for flipping out earlier and for seeming like such a tease. I really do want you; I'm just not sure...well, I'm just not sure of anything right now." At that exact moment, Sasha's stomach cried out in a loud hunger pang. "Well, I am sure of breakfast. Wanna grab some before I have to head home?"

"I do believe I can handle that. Where do you want to go? Somewhere quick or a sit down kind of deal? We can easily find both nearby." Garrick handed Sasha her boots from next to the couch and sat down to put on his own shoes.

Sasha grinned. "I think anything is good right now."

"In that case, I suggest we get going then." Garrick stopped by the front door to pick up his room key and his wallet. Turning back to Sasha, he held out his hand and led her out of the hotel room. A few short minutes later, Garrick and Sasha were safely installed in a nearby café consuming large amounts of coffee, eggs and toast. Sometime during breakfast Sasha could feel her head begin to throb signaling the need for her medication. Once finished, Sasha bestowed Garrick a quick peck on the lips and headed off to her cab with the promise of yet another date for this evening.

Chapter 9

Sasha sat in the hard backed chair around the rectangular conference table. It was a rich mahogany with large matching chairs. At one end was a large podium made from the same wood. A black phone sat in the middle of the table next to an intercom. Large photographs of Russian landmarks covered the walls. At the center of the room was the massive conference table. Around the table were twelve chairs. Of those twelve chairs, nine were currently filled. Flanking Sasha were Nessa, and Petre, followed by Dr. Chikachev and Dr. Anchova. Across from her, on the other side of the table were various doctors and high level bureaucrats, all whom she had seen before. She really just didn't care to remember their names.

Petre cleared his throat and raised a hand to signal the beginning of the meeting. Standing up, he walked to the podium. Sasha hadn't realized this was a formal gathering. Usually, Petre just took her in his office to yell at her. A sense of foreboding crept over her. This level of debriefing only happened in serious cases or after major mishaps. Great! Now she was a major mishap. That's something to write in the journal. Sasha tried to focus on Petre and what he was saying to the group.

"...this meeting has been called to discuss Sasha's first mission. So far, the young woman hasn't given us anything useful. What she has done has been to tour around Moscow with the target. Basically, Sasha has been dating the young man rather than getting the intel we need. I would say that so far her test mission has been a complete failure. Therefore we have two options—one that Sasha be pulled immediately and a surveillance team placed on the target. Or two, we allow her back in and wire her. That way she knows that this is serious business."

Sasha wanted to punch Petre really hard, over and over again. Sure, It wasn't like she wanted this to end...well whatever this was she had going with Garrick. Pride was rearing its ugly head at Director Kerchanko words. If she wanted to she could complete this mission effortlessly - so how dare he call her a failure! She was half tempted to root around his head just to show him what kind of failure she was, however the last

thing she wanted was to find her freedom curtailed because of insubordination.

"Petre, can I ask how likely it is for this man to be a CIA operative. From what you've told me he has been touring around with Ms. Verochka." Sasha turned to face General Kimko as he spoke. She could remember meeting the older man one other time when the current president had been first elected and he had been giving a tour.

"In all likelihood – no. That doesn't mean that he isn't nor do we have the time to wait for her to grow up and accomplish her mission." The tic was back in Petre's cheek signaling that he didn't think his intel had been faulty concerning the target.

"So far I would say that as long as he's with her it's safe to say if he is a spy, he isn't in any hurry to complete his mission. What harm is there giving her one last day to complete the mission?" Kimko looked relaxed with his hands resting on his belly while leaning back in the chair.

"If that is what you think is best, then I don't have a problem with it."

Yeah, he did. Sasha focused on his thoughts trying to find out why he wasn't being completely honest. If he were to share the fact that she had spent the entire night with Garrick then Kimko might have agreed with him. So... why wasn't he sharing that little tidbit? His eyes drifted to Nessa. His thoughts were full of concern about her getting into trouble over Sasha's little rebellion. Great, now she really did feel guilty over her little fling – well, sort of.

Nessa had always been there for her and here she was endangering her livelihood by acting like a teenager - which she was - not that that mattered. Nessa deserved a whole lot more from someone who still liked to pretend that she was her mother. Okay, Sasha would have to stop playing around. "Look, I'll get you the answers you seek. After tonight you will know whether or not he is a spy. If he is, then you'll know his target as well."

While everyone else nodded, Petre rolled his eyes. The sight filled Sasha with the overwhelming urge to chuck something heavy and blunt at his fat head. He had choices that she didn't. He could at the very least be a little understanding at her need to explore facets of her life she had never been allowed to. Were she not born with this cursed ability, then Sasha could have been free to be anything, rather than trapped in a career she wasn't sure she wanted.

"Very well then. Let's adjourn this meeting until tomorrow afternoon where we will be expecting a full report from the young woman." Kimko stood up, as did his aides. They were the first to leave the room.

Thankfully, Petre waited until everyone had left before unleashing his hostility on Sasha. "You better not be jerking their chain young lady because I'm fed up with the shit you've been pulling. I'm way past giving you a pity party. That little stunt you played last night could have gotten Nessa in a lot of trouble. She's covered for you long enough to endanger her job. Tonight is your last night, you'd better not screw this up." Stomping off, Petre slammed the door leaving her alone with Nessa.

What could she say? Tears welled in her eyes. Sasha hadn't meant to cause Nessa any grief. "Nessa, listen I'm sorry. I didn't really mean to stay the night, honest. I just fell asleep after the movie and didn't wake up until late this morning. I promise."

Nessa wrapped her arms around her. "I understand. I really do, but Petre is right. You have to end this tonight or you can forget all the progress you've made. They'll have you back to those monotonous training exercises you so love."

Sasha shuddered at that thought. She really didn't want to go back to those silly little exercises. They had no real purpose other than to sharpen her skills at probing a person's thoughts unnoticed. Sasha would go nuts if she had to go back to those endless drills. They always left her with splitting headaches by the end of the day. "Okay, I said I would do it and I will."

Nessa looked at her long and hard before nodding. "Good, now why don't you tell me when and where you are supposed to meet him and we'll see about getting you ready for your mission."

Sasha looked away from Nessa. She didn't want to betray Garrick, especially after having spent so much time with him. She could almost feel those curious emotions that his kisses and embraces caused within her. Then too, she couldn't help but remember the way he had been with her last night. He hadn't pushed her for sex - rather he had held her and respected her decision. Granted, she didn't have any real experience with men, but from what she had heard from others' thoughts she knew that what Garrick had done was out of the normal. Could a man who was that much of a gentleman be a spy?

Sasha didn't think so. The minute she said he wasn't she had a feeling they wouldn't let her see him anymore. She needed to stop this nonsense. She wasn't the only one who could get into trouble over this. "I'm supposed to meet him at his hotel tonight. There is a rooftop café that we're going to eat at. I am to meet him at 6:30 p.m."

Nessa began to rub her back in sympathy. "I can see how hard this is on you Sasha. I wish things were different - but they're not. Come on

then, let's go shopping for something nice to wear. We may not be able to change anything but we can make the most of it. A girl has to look good you know."

Chapter 10

Garrick couldn't remember the last time he'd been so excited about a date. While Sasha hadn't slept with him, he'd felt her excitement grow with each kiss. Last night had been a new experience. He was still hard as a rock - but with Sasha that wasn't anything new. They had honestly fallen asleep.

Cuddling.

Who knew it could feel so good?

Standing in the lobby, Garrick tried to look casual leaning against the architectural column. What he felt was far from casual. With each successive date, he felt something. What? He hadn't a clue. He just knew that a strange sensation settled in his chest when he first caught a glimpse of her. No matter how she looked, the feeling remained. It was to a point now that just thinking about her brought it on.

Garrick looked down at his shirt, a green long sleeved pullover. It was the best one he had brought with him. He had seriously considered buying a new one today but thought better of it. Sasha wouldn't really care. It was only his own vanity and pride he was thinking about. But something about Sasha made him want to look his best. Already his khakis felt two sizes too small. Just thinking of her had his body at attention.

As if his thoughts could conjure her, she appeared. Stepping inside the revolving door, she moved with a fluid grace. Her mini skirt and leggings accentuated that fine ass. She also wore those knee high leather boots from last night. He was already having fantasies involving those. A smile broke out as she caught a glimpse of him. That feeling Garrick had been having in chest intensified. His head felt lighter and his cock harder.

Watching her sashay towards him, Garrick took in her red sweater. It caressed her curves much like a lover would. Like *he* would, giving half an opportunity. Getting through his dinner without grabbing her and throwing her to the floor was going to be incredibly difficult. Could she sense the reaction from him? As she came to a stop directly in front of him, Garrick could smell her desire. It rose off of her in waves. Just her

scent had him aching to touch her, to please her, to give her everything her heart desired.

"Hey... Did everything go alright with your mom?" Garrick could hear his voice rasp in a near growl.

Sasha's mind froze at his question, highlighting the fact that she should have been prepared for him asking this question. Having close to no experience at this kind of thing she hadn't even thought this conversation might pop up. "Sort of, you could say she gave me the riot act and told me not to do anything like that without checking in with her."

"Well... good. I felt a tiny bit guilty all day thinking that I had gotten you into trouble by not waking you and sending you home."

Sasha felt a tad bit of guilt herself especially now that he was here in front of her being sweet and everything. Stop it! She needed to focus on the fact that she couldn't be the nice girl anymore. She had to be the bitch. Get in his head. Get what she needed and get out. Only... looking into those baby blue eyes and reading the way he felt about her in his thoughts really made it hard to be that person. "I'm a big girl and she'll just have to get used to it. What can I say?"

"Are you ready to eat? The café is just up the main elevator. It's an industrial café with a small dance floor. They specialize in techno music, according to the brochure anyway."

"Sure. That sounds really cool. I wonder what 'industrial' means in terms of a café? You think that means everything is stainless steel?" Sasha allowed Garrick to steer her into the elevator. On the way up, she continued her musings out loud. "Maybe they mean like cinder blocks and pipes. 'Industrial' always makes me think of factories. Wouldn't it be funny if instead of waiters they had an assembly line that the food came out on?" Sasha knew she was rambling and couldn't help it. Every step she took the more guilt she felt. Soon she'd have to betray his trust and honestly – she wasn't ready for that. The feelings she had for Garrick were unexplainable, to say the least. All she really wanted was more time to explore that and see where it went.

As the elevator came to a halt, the doors opened. Garrick escorted Sasha out and followed behind her. The elevator had taken them directly to the foyer of the restaurant. A waiter quickly greeted them and led them to a small round table bolted to the concrete floor. The table was a white composite with stainless steel chairs. The chairs were surprisingly comfortable. Once seated, the waiter handed them the menus and walked away, allowing them time to peruse.

Soon, the waiter came back and the orders were taken. With a drink in hand, Sasha thought about breaking into his head. Dread consumed her at the thought. Once she did this, everything would be over. Maybe, she'd just do it after dinner – and a little dancing.

All thoughts of FSB fled her mind as Sasha felt the rhythm of the music. Grabbing Garrick's hand, she dragged him to the stainless steel dance floor. After a few dances, Garrick pulled her aside away from the other patrons. Lowering his head, he claimed Sasha's lips with a powerful hunger. Quickly, Sasha joined in and wrapped her arms around his neck. Taking a deep, calming breath, Garrick pulled back. Removing her arms from his neck, he held onto her hands. As if he could let her go.

"Sasha, I just want to tell you that this entire experience has been incredible. I'm really going to miss you when I go home tomorrow night."

The words floated through to Sasha's befuddled mind.

Tomorrow night.

He was really leaving tomorrow. With everything running through her mind she hadn't even thought of the possibility of him leaving already. Somewhere in the deep recesses of her mind she knew. He'd be gone. The rest of her was reluctant to believe it could be true. More now than ever her decision to complete the mission was paramount. A part of her ached to experience all the bliss of womanhood. She longed to feel that passion that Garrick often thought about. In truth, she wanted Garrick.

At that moment, Sasha decided she would take this experience for herself and not look back. Damn the consequences! She loved Nessa like a mother, but she would not allow herself to miss out on what could possibly be a once in a lifetime opportunity because of her. Sasha's eyes welled up with unshed tears as she smiled sadly up at Garrick. "I didn't realize you'd be leaving so soon - I guess I never thought about you having to go home. I've had a great time with you – I'm not sure what else to say. I don't know how to feel."

After a few suspended moments, Garrick leaned in and gently placed a kiss upon Sasha's lips. He could see she was on the verge of tears. "I'm sorry. I should have told you sooner. A part of me was hoping – I don't know, just...do you want to come back to my room? We could watch another movie and order chocolate?"

"That sounds great. Can we try a different kind of chocolate?"

"Not a problem. We can order a whole bunch if you want. You ready to go?" The sooner Garrick could get her out of the café, the better. Just the thought of her in his hotel room again, had him instantly aroused.

"We can go now if you want. I was finished eating before we got up to dance. Just let me grab my purse and we can head down," uttered Sasha. She had actually been thinking about calling Nessa to tell her she'd be late or not back until tomorrow. The last thing she needed was this experience marred by FSB barging in. What a thought!

Quickly picking up her purse, Sasha walked with Garrick back towards the elevator. Once there, Garrick selected his floor number and the doors closed. It was a silent trip down to the fourth floor. Sasha thought about all the scenarios that could play out. She could start talking about work or his reasons for being in Russia and read his thoughts, call a cab and be back at FSB by midnight. Or, she could go back to his room, have a nice time, let come what may and perhaps read his thoughts later. If she chose the latter then she'd most surely have to call Nessa. She wouldn't want her to worry and with everything that happened in the conference room, she didn't want to cause her any more trouble. Just then, her thoughts ran away from her.

Whoa Sasha. Just forget it. He's not a spy; I'd have figured it out by now. I really just want to do things to him. God, I'm such an idiot. Why do I have to think about this? Why can't I just let him do all those wonderful, naughty things he's been thinking all night? Why am I still discussing this? Do I need to overanalyze this? No! I'm just going for it.

As the elevator stopped at the fourth floor and the doors swung open, Garrick and Sasha exited towards his room. Once there, Garrick used the key card to enter the room. As soon as they both were inside, Sasha turned around and shut the door before she could change her mind.

"Garrick, if you don't mind, I really need to use the restroom. I also need to make a quick call to my mother to let her know I might be late - if that's all right. I'll be right back." With that said Sasha quickly ducked into the bathroom and shut the door. Now that she was in here she suddenly realized she had been locked in this bathroom two times in the last twenty-four hours. *What a strange habit. Great, now I'm talking to myself - in my own head nonetheless.* Quickly Sasha dialed the phone. What could she say to Nessa that wouldn't have her worried? Who knew? She'd figure something out sooner or later. *Hopefully sooner* Sasha thought as Nessa picked up the phone.

"Hello? Sasha?"

"Hi Nessa. I just want to tell you I might not be coming home tonight. I might be on to something here and I don't want to miss it. I'll fill you in on it in the morning. Can you make sure Petre doesn't send the hounds after me?" Sasha stopped to take a quick breath before continuing. "You

know I'll be fine here. I'm sure Petre already has someone tailing me anyway."

"Sasha, I know you have feelings for the young man but are you sure you can handle being alone with him all night? I'm not sure you're ready for..."

"I said I'd be alright Nessa. Trust me. I'll be fine. Just make sure Petre stays away."

"Alright Sasha, I understand. I knew this would happen at some point I had just hoped it would be with a guy who'd be around after the fact. But – I'll keep Petre away – if that's really what you want."

Sasha sighed. "It is. Thank you Nessa. I'll see you in the morning. Bye." Closing the phone, Sasha took a deep breath and looked in the vanity mirror. She ran her hands through her hair just in case. Digging through her purse she found her lip gloss and reapplied it. Assured she looked her best, she steadied herself and unlocked the bathroom door. Exiting the room, she found Garrick already lounging on the couch, his shoes haphazardly kicked off. He was the epitome of a Greek God.

If there had ever been a man made more perfect, Sasha hadn't seen him. His green pullover was just tight enough to outline his sculpted physic. She couldn't help but moan at the sight of him resting. The look he gave her as she crossed into the room was one of pure animalistic lust.

Watching Sasha enter and move towards the couch, Garrick wanted nothing more than to rush towards her. Restraining himself was difficult as he allowed her to come closer. It had been a shock when she had immediately agreed to come back to his room. From the night before and her reaction earlier this morning, Garrick really hadn't thought she would go through with tonight's date – let alone come back to the room again. Hope bloomed in his chest as she slowly moved towards him. Her eyes glittered with an unknown passion waiting to be released. A fierce heat rushed through his body as he watched her approach.

Slowly, Garrick rose from the couch. Instantly he was there - touching her – caressing her. Languidly, Garrick kissed Sasha's lips, cheeks and chin. With one long stroke of his tongue upon her neck, Sasha shivered. Simultaneously, he began to unbutton her skirt. A short denim skirt, he maneuvered the zipper with ease. Continuing to lavish her body with kisses, Garrick moved on to her pull over sweater. Sliding the fabric sensuously along her midsection, he grazed her lace encased breasts with his hands. Her nipples were petite pebbles beneath the creamy lace. Reluctant to discontinue kissing Sasha, Garrick pulled her sweater over her breasts to her neck. With her bra exposed, he deftly unhooked the front

closure. Her breasts sprung free from their bindings to greet the chilly air. Throwing her bra to the floor, Garrick wrapped one hand around Sasha's breast massaging gently.

Breaking their kiss, Garrick quickly pulled her sweater over her head leaving her top half bare to his gaze. Leisurely, he took her in. Her perky breasts were high and full. Her skin was a soft cream that contrasted beautifully with her chocolate colored hair. A soft pink color appeared on Sasha's cheeks, signaling her awareness of Garrick's attention upon her body.

Immediately Sasha was apprehensive about the situation. From where she was standing, they both had on entirely too many clothes. As Garrick leaned in to lick her breast, Sasha moaned aloud. Her knees felt weak and her stomach was all aflutter. She didn't know what to do with all this emotion. Never before had she felt this much longing – this much desire. Sasha cupped Garrick's head to her breast as she closed her eyes and let the sensation surround her. Without consciously trying, Sasha not only read – but felt Garrick's thoughts. They ran in all different directions yet all centered on her and her body. Being cognizant of Garrick's thoughts propelled Sasha's arousal. She knew exactly what seeing her half naked was doing to him. She had seen the tell tale bulge as he relaxed on the couch earlier. Now, as he moved from one breast to the other, Sasha melted in his arms.

Suddenly, Garrick's wondrous tongue was gone. Bereft, Sasha opened her eyes to find him unzipping her boots. She lifted her foot as he slid the boot from it and moved on to the other. Without them on, Garrick was able to pull down her leggings. Sasha wasn't sure how she should feel standing in just her red lace thong. Quickly, before she could change her mind, she reached forward and pulled Garrick's sweater over his head. What she revealed amazed her. The sculpted muscles shifted and bunched under her appreciative gaze. Without thinking, Sasha touched his chest. Small crisp hairs covered his torso and ended in a path that disappeared beneath his khakis. At that moment, Garrick obligingly unbuttoned his pants allowing them to fall to the floor. Stepping out of them, he picked up Sasha and carried her to the awaiting bed.

Laying her gently upon the covers, Garrick kissed his way down her stomach. Gradually he reached her thighs. Once there, he slid his fingers under the straps of her thong and ripped. A loud gasp escaped Sasha. Garrick briskly removed the shredded panties and spread her thighs. What was before him was a buffet of womanhood. Dipping his head, he

let his tongue rasp gently against her clitoris. Instantly her body bucked in response.

"Garrick... I" Sasha didn't have the coherent thoughts to form words. Her mind screamed his name as he continued to lick and suck upon her. Gingerly, Garrick placed one finger at her entrance. Moisture seeped from her core to coat his finger. Encouraged by her eager reaction, he pressed it inside of her. The inside walls flexed and grabbed at the pleasurable invasion. Pushing in a second finger, she writhed in excitement. Garrick continued to lick as he slowly worked the two fingers in and out of her tight channel. Soon Sasha's groans became louder. The world seemed to slip away until there was only this wonderful sensation streaking through her like lightening.

Watching Sasha's orgasm rush through her, Garrick quickly slipped out of his boxer briefs. Her body shuddered and spasmed as she came back to him. Poised above her, he slowly nudged the head of his cock into her tight entrance. Easing it in, he paused at the barrier of her innocence. Watching her expression, Garrick leaned down to take her lips in a passionate kiss as he pushed past her hymen.

Sasha quickly pulled her lips away from Garrick's as she inhaled a sharp breath. Tears formed in her eyes at the jagged pain. All her romance novels had spoken of was a quick pinch. This felt nothing like that.

Pressing kisses along her forehead and face Garrick whispered, "Its okay, Sasha. I'll wait until you're ready. Tell me when it doesn't hurt any longer."

Sasha fought to control the urge to push him away – while simultaneously drawing him closer. As several moments passed, the pain lessened to a dull ache. Sasha could feel his fullness inside of her. Unsure of how to proceed, she whispered, "I'm alright Garrick. It's okay. Go ahead."

Slowly, Garrick pulled back to where only an inch remained. Rubbing her clitoris with one hand, he eased his cock back inside of her until he was again fully seated. Repeating this several times, he saw Sasha's face begin to relax and her breathing quicken. Being moments from his own release, he felt his control teeter on the edge. As his thrusts became hurried, Sasha once again moaned. His mind began to frantically plead for her orgasm before he could release his. Being so close – and her so tight – he wasn't sure he could last much longer. A rush of euphoria flowed through his body as he felt Sasha's channel tighten and quiver around his cock milking him of his seed.

As Garrick collapsed upon the bed, he knew he would never be able to forget her, this week or Moscow.

A tear slipped from Sasha's eyes as she heard his final thoughts. Her own heart echoed his thoughts.

To be continued...

Sasha and Garrick's story is continued in the novel "Uncovered Thoughts" published by Hearts on Fire Books.

For the kindle version visit Amazon:

http://www.amazon.com/Uncovered-Thoughts/dp/B00292BNGM/ref=pd_rhf_p_t_1

For all other formats visit these fine e-book retailers.

http://www.coffeetimeromance.com/BookStore/index.php?main_page=pubs_product_book_info&products_id=2218

<http://www.heartsonfirebooks.com/downloads.aspx?categoryid=3>



www.feedbooks.com
Food for the mind