Safe Asylum

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

Part 1

Hal Meacham had received the call less than an hour or so before. A woman had called into the New York office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and asked to speak with somebody from counterespionage. He had received enough information to understand that he could be dealing with a deep undercover operative of the Soviet Union. He rushed to get there. Somebody from the Bureau would already be talking to her, but he needed to be there for as much of their interview as he could. For some reason the Bureau disliked the Agency being involved in “a domestic crime” but he would apply the usual pressure to be allowed to question her, but observing their work would be helpful.

It did not surprise him that spies might be seeking asylum in the west. It seemed as if America had proven its superiority of late. Six years before, President Kennedy had stared down the missile threat, and then only a month ago an American had walked on the moon to show the capacity of the nation. 1969 was a big year. The talk at Langley was now all about forcing the Russians to the bargaining table to declare and reduce their nuclear weapons. 1970 would open a decade of change. For Hal it seemed that the writing was on the wall for the Soviets. Smart Russians might be able to read that writing.

He produced his card and fully expected the invisible sneer that staff of the FBI reserved for their rival agency. Sometimes both organizations needed to be reminded that they were on the same side. He was asked to wait.

“I would prefer direct access,” he said. “I have come a long way in a very short time.”

Rod Calloway stepped out of the room when this message was passed to him. He introduced himself to Hal, adding – “of course you guys will get your turn.”

“This individual is just going to have to repeat everything that she is saying. Why should we waste time?” said Hal. “You guys do counterespionage so well - I will just be watching and listening.” A little praise and deferment often works.

“Come on in then,” said Rod. “You are not going to believe this story.”

There was another agent sitting at the table – somebody who would later be introduced as David Gage. But on the other side sat a strikingly beautiful young woman. She was wearing a print dress in brightly colored angle patterns – something that might be called high-fashion. Her blonde was worn up in perhaps a beehive style, and her face wore the makeup popular at the time, accentuating the big blue eyes. There was something about her that drew Hal to her immediately. He guessed that it might be fear, which always seems attractive in a woman. Her eyes seem to be like those of a doe caught in a bear trap.

“We have been joined by a colleague,” Rod said to this obvious victim. “So perhaps you should repeat by introducing yourself?” Rod then turned to Hal as if to witness some surprised expression about to arrive.

“I was born Vladimir Vassilivich Bokovsky in Kiev, Ukraine. I have worked for the KGB since I left school. I travelled to Europe as a junior dancer with the Bolshoy ballet and learned to improve my American English in Europe. For the last few years, I have been living in Washington as Joanne Wilmington.”

“I am sorry, but Vladimir is a man’s name?” Her appearance was totally female, and so was the voice. What was going on here? The thought occurred to Hal that this might be a practical joke. If it was it was a great one. Certainly Rod was watching him with a wry smile.

“I am male,” said the interviewee. “Although I have almost forgotten what it was like to present myself as a man. As a dancer I could cover both roles, and when it came to me infiltrating into the US it was decided that I might be more useful as a woman than as a man.”

“I am sorry guys, I am just here as an observer at this stage,” Hal nodded the G-men respectfully. “But let me get this straight, you are saying that you are not the woman you appear to be, but a man – a Russian agent in drag?”

“Well, it is more than that. I have lived as a woman as long as I have been here, and even a little before that,” she said. “The identity came up and it was female, so I took it.”

“You don’t look anything like a man,” said Hal, in disbelief.

“Do you know what female hormones can do?” she said. “Even if I were to take my clothes off right now you would think me female, until you examined my crotch closely. And that is not an invitation.”

“We have details of her contacts and targets,” said Dave to Hal. “But we are now moving on the motivation, so you are just in time.”

“Yes, why are you seeking asylum, Joanne?” said Rod, using the female name. It seemed appropriate to Hal. This person was no Vladimir.

“I am being recalled,” she said. “Or at least that is the suggestion. I have been ineffective of late. That is their opinion and I share it. But I cannot go back. I have got used to my life here. Over there what will I be?”

“I am still a little lost,” said Hal. “What do you do here?”

“I am in women’s fashion,” she said. “I persuaded my handler that this was a business that allowed me to travel. I have an exclusive boutique in Washington which allows me to mix with wives of important politicians, officials and diplomats, and attend or organize parties. Nobody suspects their wife’s stylist might be a Russian agent.”

“And a master of disguise,” said Hall wryly. As she was speaking he was searching for some hint that what she had said was true, but he could find none. It seemed inconceivable that this was a man. In fact, it seemed just plain wrong.

“Please excuse our associate,” said Rod. “We need to be satisfied that you request is genuine before we discuss what you might offer. You are telling us that Russia is your home, but that you will not be going back. It seems difficult to understand.”

“It was his home,” she said. “It was never mine. I want to stay as a woman. I want to complete the change of my sex. I would like to stay in fashion. Have you seen what women wear in Russia? I could never live there as a woman, and I never want to be a man again.”

“But what about your family?” said Dave Gage, clearly a family man from the tone. “You must have somebody over there?”

“I have a father and a brother, neither of who would accept me as I am,” she said without a trace of regret in abandoning them. “I had a girlfriend there too, but that is not the direction I am now headed.”

A strange thought came into Rod’s head. It was not an understanding that he was now dealing with a man with homosexual tendencies. No, the thought was – ‘I have a chance with her after all’. It left him uncomfortable, but still pleased.

“But your handler knows your identity?” queried Rod.

“My handler, as you call him, does not approve. He regards me as effeminate and effeminacy as a sign of Western decadence and debauchery. He is an old school communist and would have the world made the same equal shade of dark grey. I live for color. I have given you his name, together with others in my cell and people we have turned or bought off. I would gladly see him in handcuffs, but watch for a suicide pill.”

Hal turned to Rod. He said – “Rod, can I just ask that before you start breaking down doors we see whether we might be able to channel a little disinformation towards Moscow. We have something we are working in that direction.”

“You know what we do,” said Rod firmly. “We arrest spies. You guys do what you do, and we do what we do. You are only here as a courtesy.”

“I accept that, of course,” said Hal. “But it seems to me that Joanne here is a genuine defector, but she does not have any information beyond her immediate circle. She may be more valuable so long as nobody knows that she has come to you. If she is willing to help, that is?” He looked at her.

“I am the kind of person who commits and follows that commitment,” she said. “If America is to be my new home, I will serve it. But only if it will be my new home. And it is true, nobody knows that I am here, and nobody has penetrated this office, as far as I know.”

“Well, that’s good news,” said Dave, without a trace of irony.

“She is still in our custody for now,” said Rod, as if asserting ownership.

“Have you checked the information she gave you? Said Hal.

“We have not broken down any doors yet, but yet. A mass arrest will require some days to organize, and there are also some sensitivities. The wives of certain politicians and senior officials have been … loose lipped, we might say. How to treat them is something we need to consider.”

“Alright, we have a few days to use her to get some information to our friends in the KGB, If I may borrow this lady from you? I can promise her return will assurances from the very top, I assure you.”

The two FBI agents looked at one another. They did not need to speak. They both knew their thoughts were aligned. The CIA were cowboys riding the world as if there were barriers to respect. The FBI was methodical and effective. They had rules to follow. They were like dirt farmers, working the soil and producing the goods. But US presidents like cowboys.

Rod turned to Joanne. He said – “Are you sure that you want to help these guys? You may be at risk in doing it. If anybody thinks you are a potential defector, you are dead.”

Joanne Wilmington looked across at Hal. She was assessing him, but her blue eyes sparkled as she did it, and Hal found himself getting excited. Her eyes seemed to speak to him – to ask him whether she should trust him with her life. He let a small smile slip. It was a smile of invitation, and it came from below his waist.

“I want to help,” she said. “I want to be able to stay and to disappear in America. Is that what you are offering?”

“Do this, and that is what you will get,” said Hal. She would get what she wanted, and hopefully he would get what he wanted too.

“I’ll do it.”

Hal stood up. “That’s fine then. You have other questions to answer, and I have to arrange a letter for these gentlemen so that you can be delivered into my care. I will arrange for you to collected from the garage in an obscured vehicle in a few hours. We don’t have much time because the Bureau will want to start breaking down those doors. You will need to go home and get changed.”

“Changed? She asked.

“You will need to be seen with me tonight, and then you will need to seduce me,” he said.

Part 2.

“Have I succeeded?” she asked. “Are you seduced?”

They had stepped outside the restaurant after he had helped put the coat around her flawless shoulders, sneaking a higher level peek at the impressive bosom that had attracted him all night across the table. It had started to get cool lately, so she needed the coat, and for extra comfort she put an arm through his as they walked the two blocks to his apartment building.

“It is my favorite restaurant,” he said. “Partly because the food is very good, but mainly because the barman works for the Soviets, and just because of me.”

“Really?” she said. “You still go there regularly?”

“It would be churlish not to give it custom when they have invested in it,” he grinned. “So, when I want to be seen that is where I go. If I want somebody to see me being seduced then that is the right place.”

“You haven’t answered my question,” she said. “Have I succeeded in seducing you?”

“You are an expert in that,” he said.

“How many times do I have to ask you?” She was insistent, but she did not break her stride, her elegant black heels clicking on the paving stones.

He wanted to tell her. He wanted to tell her that there were feelings within him that she had brought to the surface which a hundred women before had never been able to. With all other women that he charmed in the course of his work, he could simply switch of his emotions. Why not her? Why not the one woman who was not really a woman at all.

“You know you have succeeded,” he said. “Ask anybody in the restaurant. It is clear that I am besotted with you. And now you will do me the favor of stepping into my apartment and closing the honey trap on me.” He paused for a moment in thought, and then added – “How exactly do you do that, given that you are not … complete?”

“I can show you,” she said.

“It is not necessary,” he said, although there was something about the way that she said those words that made his cock uncurl.

“I want to,” she said. It was a voice of naïve innocence. He was willing his lobby to be closer.

“Given that the restaurant is compromised, I could not explain,” he said. “But what we want you to do is to identify one of your superiors as a double agent. The FBI want to move in and when they do any information that you have fed will be treated as unreliable, but in this case, we expect immediate action by your organization. Once your superior is dead, you are done.”

“You don’t have to tell me, but can I ask why you want this unnamed superior of mine, dead?”

“Well, I don’t have to tell you, so I won’t,” he said. “But it will be clear that we consider him dangerous, so I guess that mean we think him competent and incorruptible, which is a rare thing in the high levels of any Government agency.”

“I dislike them all,” she said. “Are sure he will be killed immediately?”

“Oh yes,” said Rod. “We are sure … and we are home. This is my building.”

He opened the door and they stepped into the elevator.

It was a place where nobody could see, and no bug of that era could be effective. They could drop the act. He turned her face towards his and he kissed her passionately. She put her arms around his neck and pulled him into her face. They barely noticed the doors open at his floor.

He fumbled excitedly to get the key into his door with one arm still around her and his lips still pressed to hers. They sidled awkwardly down the hall in their embrace as she pulled at his jacket and his tie. They, and her coat, seemed to somehow fall away with breaking their clinch.

“I said I would show you,” she said. She loosened his belt and her hand went down the front of his pants like a hungry eel, and grabbed his throbbing penis.

“You talked about your body in the interview this morning,” he said. “You said that if you were seen naked you would appear female. I need to see that.” He turned her and unzipped her dress.

She stepped away and turned back to look at him as the dress fell to the floor. She moved slowly a deliberately, undressing so as to build his desire, as it if needed any more stimuli. She pulled off the slip revealing a bra and panties in devil red. She slowly unhitched the bra. Two perfect breasts fell out, still pert as if on a well-developed teenager. Her panties looked empty, but she worked them down bending forward so he could not see until she stood bolt upright.

There was something there, but it was not of great size. He barely took any notice, because she had skillfully removed a pin or two from her hairs so that it tumbled around her shoulders, a Niagra falls of soft blonde curls. His pants were around his ankles and his boxer shorts were like the big top – a huge tent.

“Now I see my success,” she said.

“Now I see everything,” he said. “Now I see that you are a woman and always remain a woman. I understand. I believe.”

“I could suck you or pull you off,” she said. “But I have prepared myself to receive you. Would you make love to me as a woman?”

She hardly had time to say the last word. He lifted her up and seemed to cry her on his iron bar into the bedroom and lay her down. He needed no further invitation to enter her. He lifted her buttocks off the bed to allow him clear access, and he took it, plunging in to full length slowly, so each could feel the hottest of flesh in contact.

She worked it and she kissed her on the mouth, like a man and a woman. Because that is what he was, and that is what she was. And when they orgasmed it was simultaneous and their souls merged.

Part 3

She was in the kitchen when she heard him at the door. She just had time to check herself in the mirror. Her hair was brown now – less eye-catching but closer to her natural color. Her hair was still long and beautiful, and that was how she liked it, not least because that is how he liked it.

She was cooking something French. She had vowed not to cook anything Russian. It smelt good. He would love it. They would drink wine, and maybe sit on the patio of their suburban house and talk just for a little while. He would want sex. She did. It seemed the start of a perfect life.

She had told him about sex change surgery. She could have it done in Morocco where a French doctor was constructing vaginas with full sexual feeling. He could issue her with papers confirming that she was female. They could get married. They could adopt. They could have a family, and a family life.

“What’s wrong?” she said. She could see the look on his face. She had never seen a look like it, anger and sadness screwed into an ugly ball that had been the face of the man she loved hopelessly.

“He is not dead,” said Hal. “In fact it looks like he has a promotion. Deputy Chairman of the Committee for State Security. So, when Andropov has served his five years in a year or two, he will be in charge. It is exactly what we didn’t want.”

Her face went pale. That was not the worst of it. She knew what was next.

“Dangerous, competent and incorruptible. That is what I told you. I told only you,” he said. “That is what got him his job. That is what you told them!”

“Rod, I didn’t,” she said. “I don’t know how this happened. I fed them everything that you gave me – all the fake supporting material that showed that he had been turned by our side. It is our side. I want to with you. I want to be American, I want to be your wife.”

She felt her knees collapse with the weight of the tears filling her eyes. She looked up at Rod, praying for him to believe her.

“I’m sorry, Darling,” he said. She heard that last word and was satisfied that it might be the last word as he reached into his jacket. It would be a bullet. That would be quick. Innocence did not matter at a time like this. This was her world, and she would die how she lived.

“I had to tell you that, to test you,” Rod said. He had reached into his pocket for a telex. She could see that it referred to the death of a prominent Russian official in “an apparent purge as the highest levels of Soviet Intelligence”. “I am sorry to distress you. My boss insisted that we run a final check. This job is shit, isn’t it I might have to transfer to Department of Transportation.”

“So …”, she could do nothing but keep sobbing, but this time in relief.

“So, you had better start packing,” he said. “I have got you a passport and we are headed to Morocco.”

The End

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Erin’s seed: “A Soviet spy has been working undercover for a long time living as a woman in America. She turns herself in because she is being recalled by her handlers and she knows it is the end of her life as a woman. The agent she confesses too is appalled and smitten, and there are complications …”