

Spy Tango

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It was 1985, and the grand ballroom of Vienna's Hotel Imperial was glowing with chandeliers and candlelight. The room was full of people laughing and talking, enjoying the fancy evening. Among them was John Harris, an American businessman - or at least, that's what he wanted everyone to think. John was actually a CIA agent, there on a mission to gather information about a suspected arms deal. He blended in with the crowd, but his eyes were always searching, looking for any sign of trouble.

On the other side of the room, Sofia Markov moved gracefully in her sleek black gown. She wasn't just another guest - Sofia was a top KGB agent, there for the same reason as John. She was also trying to find out more about the arms deal. As she

looked around the room, her eyes met John's. They both knew immediately who the other was. There was no need for introductions.

John, always confident, walked over to Sofia with a smile.

"Care to dance?" he asked in Russian, his tone smooth.

"Why not?" Sofia replied in English, her smile mysterious as she took his hand.

They stepped onto the dance floor as a tango began to play. Each move they made was careful, like they were both trying to figure out the other's intentions without giving away too much. "What brings an American businessman to Vienna?" Sofia asked, her tone light, but her eyes sharp.

"Opportunities," John answered casually. "And you? Promoting Soviet culture?"

"Something like that," Sofia replied, not taking her eyes off him.

As they danced, the tension between them grew. It wasn't just about their missions, there was something more, an attraction neither of them could ignore.

"Do you believe in fate?" Sofia asked quietly.

"I think we make our own fate," John said, holding her gaze.

The music swelled, and their dance became more intense. They were both trying to gather information without revealing too much. When the dance ended, they moved to a quiet corner of the ballroom. "Who are you really?" John asked, his voice serious.

"Does it matter?" Sofia shot back, challenging him with her eyes.

"It does if we're after the same thing," John replied firmly.

They stared at each other for a moment before Sofia sighed. "We both know why we're here. Let's call a truce. For now."

They quickly exchanged details, realising their missions were connected. Trust was thin, but they needed each other. Together, they slipped through security, bypassed alarms, and found the evidence they needed about the arms deal. Their alliance was shaky, but it worked. They managed to navigate every challenge, with a growing respect for each other keeping them going.

The night reached its peak in a chaotic showdown with the arms dealers. Gunfire erupted, breaking the calm of the gala. But John and Sofia, working together perfectly, managed to stop the dealers and secure the evidence. When it was all over, they found themselves back on the dance floor, still buzzing from the adrenaline.

"So, do we go back to being enemies now?" John asked, a hint of regret in his voice.

"Maybe," Sofia replied, her eyes softening. "Or maybe we find another dance to share."

They kissed, a quick but passionate moment of connection amidst the chaos.

In the years that followed, their paths crossed many times. What started as a tango in Vienna turned into a complicated bond, built on respect and trust, crossing the lines that once divided them.

[A man and woman in an embrace]

[Picture]

Ellis, Rennie, 1940-2003, photographer.
1992.