



A TRICKY GAME

BY SERAPHIMA BOGOMOLOVA



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Аннотация

Angela Moreaux, a charismatic and seductively attractive expert in stock market manipulations, employed by an aluminium magnate, Kazimir Stankevitch, to dismantle his rival, a young billionaire, Dmitry Voronov, is drawn into a puzzling game of secret desires, second agendas and genuine intents that leads her to discover that what she really looks for lies on the other side of the deal.

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FADE IN:

In the light of street lamps, big fluffy snowflakes swirl down, covering ground with a thin layer of snow.

MALE VOICE/DMITRY VORONOV (V.O.)

Before you, silently I sway.

In vain, I feel this agitation,

In vain, I cast a glance your way:

I'm sure that I will never say,

What freely says imagination.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NIGHTCLUB (MOSCOW) – NIGHT

A silver Bentley tears out of the night, WHIZZES along the curb and stops before the club, leaving an imprint of its tires in the new snow.

A stunning woman in her 30s, wearing an evening dress, – ANGELA – steps out of the car.

At the door to the club, a HOSTESS, a crimson-lipped smile attached to her otherwise expressionless face, welcomes Angela in.

INT. NIGHTCLUB (MOSCOW) – NIGHT

The insistent beats of MUSIC slam across the room.

Angela makes her way through the crowd of raving CLUBBERS and dancing STRIPPERS towards an elegant businessman in his late 40s, – KAZIMIR STANKEVITCH.

Seated at the table by the stage, Kazimir draws on his cigar, watching the movements of a STRIPPER#1, wrapping her tanned body around the pole.

Angela approaches Kazimir and extends her hand to him. He grabs it. His lips parted, Kazimir is about to impresses them on her hand, but Angela pulls it away.

KAZIMIR

(grinning)

Are you playing with me?

ANGELA

I think you enjoy being played with.

KAZIMIR

It depends.

ANGELA

On what?

KAZIMIR

On the game.

Angela sits down and lights up a cigarillo. Kazimir fixes his gaze on her rouge lips, encircling the chocolate tip of the cigarillo.

She draws on it, releasing a blow of smoke towards Kazimir.

He turns away and motions at a WAITRESS.

A silver 'bucket', filled with bottles of Krug champagne nestled in the crashed ice, is placed on the table.

Kazimir takes a bottle out and pours champagne into the glasses.

KAZIMIR

To our agreement.

ANGELA

As you wish.

KAZIMIR

Do you think it really matters what I wish?

ANGELA

It depends.

KAZIMIR

On what?

ANGELA

On your wish.

Kazimir leans forward and brings his glass to hers. The crystal glasses meet, releasing a CLINK.

Angela takes a sip of the champagne then puts her glass down on the table.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

I have to go.

KAZIMIR

Please stay.

ANGELA

Are you tempting me?

KAZIMIR

I'm indulging you.

Angela stands up. Kazimir grabs her hand, pulling her towards

him. She pulls away. He tightens his grip, enjoying the sensation it produces, then lets her go.

Angela walks away, engulfed by the crowd of the CLUB REVELLERS.

Kazimir motions at the stripper#1, throwing some bank notes into her direction.

The stripper#1 slowly edges towards him, stripping as she goes in the throbbings of neon light.

EXT. MOSCOW – NIGHT

Pulsating with myriads of lights, the city pushes in and out sparkling flows of the night traffic.

INT. ANGELA'S BENTLEY (MOSCOW) – NIGHT – TRAVELLING

Angela sits in the back seat, looking out. Her head leans against the car window.

The DRIVER turns the radio on. A mellow JAZZ tune of *Dream A Little Dream of Me* by Doris Day flows out. It fills in the car, as the street-lights flash by, blurring into colourful smudges before Angela's eyes.

EXT. ANGELA'S HOUSE (MOSCOW) – NIGHT

A street stretches out into the night.

On the one side of it, a seven-storey modern residential building stands. Opposite, a half-built building is coated in darkness. A crane towers over it.

INT. HALF-BUILT BUILDING/ TOP FLOOR (MOSCOW) – NIGHT

A silhouette of a broad-shouldered man in mid 30s, wearing a military navy-blue jacket – PAVEL NEKRASSOV – is visible in a large window gap. Pavel stands, looking down onto the street. Next to him, on a pile of bricks a takeaway box is placed.

Pavel reaches for the takeaway box, fingers out a plump *pirozhok* and bites in.

INTERCUT

The silver Bentley pulls up before the residential building. The driver gets out of the car and opens the door.

Angela steps out, goes to the entrance and walks up the stairway of the brightly lit entrance.

INTERCUT

Playing with his gun, Pavel points it in the direction of the residential building. His finger on the trigger, he munches on the *pirozhok* and looks down.

A crow flies in, brushing Pavel's face with its wings. A GUNSHOT shatters the night.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL (MOSCOW) – DAY

Angela lies in bed, the golden waves of her hair spread on the pillow. Her eyes open, she takes in the surroundings: the blue bareness of the hospital walls, the white sheets, the transparent plastic of the bedside table.

A NURSE enters, places a vase with pink tulips on the bedside table and walks out.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOSCOW – NIGHT – DUSK

The street lights come on, casting beams of light upon the snow-powdered streets of the city.

INT. HOSPITAL (MOSCOW) – NIGHT – DUSK

Angela gets out of bed, goes to the window and looks out.

INERCUT —

The windows in high-rises light up one by one.

INERCUT —

Angela goes back to bed. Lying, she stares out into the darkness for a while then closes her eyes.

The door opens noiselessly.

A young man in his late 20s, wearing a black silk mask covering upper part of his face, – DMITRY VORONOV —, quietly slips into the room.

Silhouetted in the dim light, coming from the window, he softly approaches the bed.

SILENT, he stands and gazes at Angela.

MALE VOICE/DMITRY VORONOV (V.O.)

Your fair eyes were sad and bright,

And voice was so sweet,

As sound of a pipe apart

Or murmur of the sea.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL (MOSCOW) – DAY – MORNING

Angela opens her eyes and reaches out to the heads of pink tulips in the vase on the bedside table. Her fingers touch their delicate petals.

The door swings open.

Kazimir strides in and throws a bouquet of red roses on the bed. Falling out of the bouquet, the crimson flowers fan across the white sheets.

Kazimir comes over and looks at Angela's bandaged arm.

KAZIMIR

What's happened?

ANGELA

I've no idea.

KAZIMIR

Are you serious?

ANGELA

As serious as I can be.

KAZIMIR

I do not find it funny.

ANGELA

Neither do I.

Kazimir takes Angela's hand and impresses his lips on it. She winces.

DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. THE RITZ-CARLTON
HOTEL (MOSCOW) –
DAY – LATE AFTERNOON**

A Mercedes-Benz S500 pulls out of the swirling snow and stops under the hotel's portico.

Out of the car steps a distinguished looking GENTLEMAN in his late 70s.

The HOTEL PORTER rushes to open the door for him.

INT. THE RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL/O2 LOUNGE (MOSCOW) – DAY – LATE AFTERNOON

The panoramic windows offer a view of the Red Square, covered in snow. Across the Square, the towers of the Kremlin silhouette in the distance.

A row of egg-shaped red and gold damask covered armchairs runs by the windows.

The Gentleman approaches one of the *eggs*, sits down in it and motions at a WAITER#1.

A cup of steaming espresso is swiftly placed on his table.

The Gentleman pulls his cigar case out and lights up a cigar. Puffing on it, he sips espresso and waits.

INT. THE RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL/O2 LOUNGE (MOSCOW) – DAY – LATER

A man, aged 30, with a travel bag on his shoulder and a laptop case in his hand, – JUAN MACBRIDE – enters the lounge.

Quickly scanning over the egg-shaped armchairs, MacBride heads to the bar counter and sits down on a stool.

The Gentleman rises out of his armchair and, coming over to MacBride, extends his hand to him.

THE GENTLEMAN

Welcome to Moscow Monsieur MacBride!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MACBRIDE'S FLAT (MOSCOW) – NEXT DAY – DAY

On the bed, face down, MacBride lies. The daylight sifts through black organza curtains, framing the tall windows of the room. His clothes are scattered on the floor. Dirty paper plates and empty beer cans crowd the coffee table.

The mobile RINGS, stops and RINGS again.

MacBride lifts his head.

The mobile keeps on RINGING.

MacBride peels off the bed and scans the floor around him. Spotting his jeans, he picks them up, drags his mobile out of the pocket and hits 'answer'.

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

Yeah?

PAVEL (V.O.)

Hey, Mac.

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

Pavel...?

PAVEL (V.O.)

Yes, man. Where have you been?

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

Me?

PAVEL (V.O.)

Yes, you. I've been trying to get you since yesterday.

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

I... was in a club. I met some girls...

PAVEL (V.O.)

You... fucking shit!

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

Yeah, whatever, just get over here.

MacBride jabs the phone off. Staring at the mess around him, he catches a sight of a white envelope. He picks it up and tears it open.

A single typed note and a bunch of keys fall out.

MacBride reads the note.

INSERT —

Dear Juan,

Take the keys. Go to my flat and wait for me there.

Angela

The DOORBELL rings.

INT. MACBRIDE'S FLAT/ HALLWAY (MOSCOW) – DAY

MacBride undoes the lock and pushes the door open.

Pavel, holding a large grocery bag in his arms, steps back, as the door swings by.

PAVEL

Hey, I'll need to fix you a Russian cure for that hangover!

INTERCUT

Pavel goes to the coffee table. Clearing the empty beer cans and dirty plates off it, he puts his grocery bag down and starts unpacking it.

INSERT —

a big jar of pickles, a bottle of vodka, and a *Stolichnaya* sausage.

BACK TO SCENE

MacBride sits down on the sofa. The note still in his hand, he glances at it then pushes it toward Pavel.

MACBRIDE

I had a note delivered to me.

Taking his coat off, Pavel joins MacBride on the sofa.

PAVEL (CONT'D)

(reading the note)

So, they want you to go to her flat and wait?

MACBRIDE

Looks like it.

PAVEL

Looks more like bullshit to me.

MACBRIDE

If this looks like bullshit to you then why would they want me to go there?

PAVEL

No idea, man.

DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. ANGELA'S HOUSE
(MOSCOW) – THREE
DAYS LATER – DAY**

Cleared off slush, the stairs of the entrance glisten in the sun.

The silver Bentley pulls up. Angela steps out and heads into the building.

The driver follows her, carrying the two bouquets, pink tulips one and red roses one, and a brown leather overnight bag.

INT. ANGELA'S HOUSE/7TH FLOOR (MOSCOW) – DAY

Angela comes to the door with the “7B” set in brass in the wood panelling and rings the DOORBELL.

The lock CLICKS and the door opens.

MARIA ALEKSEEVNA, a stern looking woman, aged 60, in horn-rimmed old-fashioned spectacles, wearing a red apron, streaked with flour, over the dark blue woollen dress, opens the door.

Angela glances at the apron and smiles.

ANGELA

Zdrastvuite, Maria Alekseevna.

Maria Alekseevna brushes the flour streaks off her apron.

MARIA ALEKSEEVNA (CONT'D)

Zdravstvui, Angela. Welcome back.

INT. ANGELA'S FLAT/ HALLWAY (MOSCOW) – DAY

Angela heads along the hallway into one of the rooms.

The driver hands the two bouquets and the overnight bag to Maria Alekseevna and leaves.

EXT. ANGELA'S HOUSE/STAIRS (MOSCOW) – DAY – LATER

MacBride and Pavel walk up the stairs, heading into the building.

INT. ANGELA'S HOUSE/7TH FLOOR (MOSCOW) – DAY

At the door to the flat “7B”, MacBride and Pavel share a hesitant look. Pavel brings his head to the door and listens then nods to MacBride. MacBride takes the key out and slides it into the lock. It **CLICKS**.

The door opens.

INT. ANGELA'S FLAT/ HALLWAY (MOSCOW) – DAY

Silhouetted in the doorframe, Maria Alekseevna, hands on hips, stands.

MARIA ALEKSEEVNA

Who the hell are you?

MACBRIDE

I... we're friends of Angela.

Blocking the way, Maria Alekseevna looks MacBride and Pavel over.

MARIA ALEKSEEVNA (CONT'D)

I see.

MacBride turns to Pavel.

MACBRIDE (CONT'D)

Pavel, tell her!

INT. ANGELA'S FLAT/LIVING ROOM (MOSCOW) – DAY

Sunshine streams in through the large windows, playing on the rows of book spines in the floor-to-ceiling bookshelves.

In the middle of the room, facing the windows, a French style sofa, upholstered in linen, stands. On a glass coffee table, a vase with pink tulips is placed.

Angela sits on the sofa, looking at the screen of her laptop. On the screen stock exchange graphs and figures are displayed.

Maria Alekseevna opens the door and peers in.

MARIA ALEKSEEVNA

There are two men here for you.

ANGELA

(keeping her eyes on the laptop screen)

Which men?

MARIA ALEKSEEVNA

They say they're your friends.

Angela looks up at Maria Alekseevna, holds her gaze for a second then shuts her laptop.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Show them in, please.

INTERCUT

Maria Alekseevna grabs MacBride and Pavel by their arms. MacBride tries to twist his arm out of her grasp.

MACBRIDE

Let me alone, woman!

Tightening her grip, Maria Alekseevna drags MacBride and Pavel along the hallway towards the living room.

MACBRIDE (CONT'D)

Pavel, tell her it's a mistake!

PAVEL

Take it easy, man.

Maria Alekseevna pushes MacBride and Pavel into —

THE LIVING ROOM

Angela rises from the sofa.

Engulfed in silence, MacBride and Pavel stare at her.

Maria Alekseevna heads into the adjacent room and returns with a bottle of *Russian Standard* vodka and three goblets. She

puts them onto the coffee table by the sofa.

Angela pours vodka into the goblets and hands them to MacBride and Pavel. They hesitate.

ANGELA

Please, MacBride and... I don't believe we've been introduced.

PAVEL

Pavel Nekrassov.

ANGELA

Delighted to meet you, Pavel.

PAVEL

Likewise.

Pavel takes the goblets, passing one to MacBride.

An awkward SILENCE lingers around them.

Angela sits down on the sofa. MacBride and Pavel follow her.

Seated, MacBride and Pavel look down at the floor. Angela looks at them.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

(to MacBride)

What are you doing here?

MACBRIDE

I don't really know.

ANGELA

What do you mean?

MacBride looks into his goblet.

MACBRIDE (CONT'D)

You see...

Fiddling with the goblet, MacBride glances up at Pavel then at Angela.

MACBRIDE (CONT'D)

Well, I was supposed to meet you at the Ritz, but instead I met an elderly man there.

ANGELA

What elderly man?

MACBRIDE

The rather suave looking bloke. He gave me a note from you.

ANGELA

I haven't written any notes to you.

MACBRIDE

He said it was from you.

Reaching for the bottle, MacBride refills his goblet and takes a swig.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

What was in the note?

MacBride pulls the note out and hands it to Angela.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

(reading the note)

What's the name of the elderly suave man, you say?

MACBRIDE

Jack. No. Jacques. Yeah, Jacques.

Angela gives the note back to MacBride.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Never heard of him.

MACBRIDE

Are you telling me you don't know who they are?

ANGELA

I thought there was just the elderly suave man in the Ritz.

MACBRIDE

(whispering)

I think I was followed.

ANGELA

By who?

MACBRIDE

There was this blacked-out Benz S500 sitting on my tail all way to the Ritz.

ANGELA

There is a certain Kazimir I know who drives in a S500.

MACBRIDE

Yeah. But where were you? I thought we were supposed to meet at the Ritz!

ANGELA

In hospital. I'd been shot at.

MACBRIDE

By who?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANGELA'S FLAT/ DINING ROOM (MOSCOW) – NIGHT – EARLY EVENING

In the middle of the oval shaped dining table, covered with a linen table cloth, a vase with the red roses stands. Around the table eight French style chairs are placed.

Maria Alekseevna sets up the table for dinner, arranging glasses and silverware around porcelain plates.

INT. ANGELA'S FLAT/ KITCHEN (MOSCOW) – NIGHT – EARLY EVENING

Maria Alekseevna stands by the gas stove, a frying pan placed on one of the rings. Scooping batter, Maria Alekseevna pours it into the pan and tips it around from side to side.

INTERCUT

Angela is seated at the head of the dining table with MacBride on her right and Pavel on her left.

Maria Alekseevna walks in and puts a plate with a pile of *blini* before them.

They reach out to the plate, taking pancakes.

PAVEL

(to Angela)

I heard you're acquainted with Kazimir?

ANGELA

Yes.

PAVEL

Is he the one known as Kazimir Stankevitch? The one who owns the aluminium syndicate SurLa?

ANGELA

How come you're so well-informed about different Kazimirs?

PAVEL

I work for the Special Police Unit.

ANGELA

Does it offer you the privilege of knowing Kazimirs and their businesses?

PAVEL

Sort of. We sometimes have to deal with his stuff.

ANGELA

His stuff sounds most intriguing.

PAVEL

He's a frequent customer of the 911 Club.

ANGELA

Are you a frequent customer of the Club too?

PAVEL

I don't have the budget. We sometimes do raids on the Club.

ANGELA

Must be a very exciting job.

PAVEL

You've mentioned that Kazimir drives in a Benz S500.

ANGELA

So?

PAVEL

It might be the same Benz that tailed Mac.

ANGELA

I doubt it.

PAVEL

What makes you sure?

ANGELA

I don't think Kazimir would personally tail anyone.

PAVEL

And what if he would?

ANGELA

He deals with far more important things.

PAVEL

Like laundering money?

ANGELA

He might.

PAVEL

The information we've gathered suggests that Kazimir Stankevitch uses clubs to launder his money.

ANGELA

Interesting point.

PAVEL

So, something rings a bell?

ANGELA

What rings a bell is that perhaps you're right about laundering money.

PAVEL

But?

ANGELA

But what?

PAVEL

You tell us.

ANGELA

Tell you what?

PAVEL

Is Kazimir your lover?

ANGELA

What are you getting at?

PAVEL

I'm not getting at anything, just asking.

Maria Alekseevna starts clearing their plates from the table.

Pavel stands up and lends her a hand.

A stack of plates balanced in his arms, he carries the dishes out of the room.

Maria Alekseevna takes a porcelain tea set out and puts it on the table.

MacBride reaches out and picks up a cup from the set. Turning it over, he looks at the feature of a flower sprig depicted on the cup.

Maria Alekseevna gives him a stern stare, takes the cup from

him and puts it back onto the table.

Pavel enters the room and sits down at the table.

PAVEL

(to Angela)

Perhaps, we can help you figure out who shot at you.

MacBride reaches out for the cup again. Maria Alekseevna slaps his hand.

PAVEL (CONT'D)

(to Angela)

Let's go over things you know and see if there's a pattern.

MacBride turns his attention from the cup to the conversation.

MACBRIDE (CONT'D)

(to Pavel and Angela)

Why don't we start with various players?

PAVEL

Players?

MACBRIDE

Like in a game.

ANGELA

I'm not sure if I understand.

MACBRIDE

Look, someone tails me in a Benz S500 to the Ritz. Then, at the Ritz, I meet this elderly man...

ANGELA

(to MacBride)

It can be just a figment of your imagination.

MACBRIDE

What is?

ANGELA

The tailing.

Maria Alekseevna puts a plate of chocolate candies and a china teapot on the table.

MacBride switches his attention to studying the flower design on the plump sides of the teapot.

Angela reaches for the plate with chocolates.

Pavel helps himself to tea.

PAVEL (CONT'D)

(to Angela)

Do you think the shot was a warning?

ANGELA

I can't really say.

PAVEL

(slurping his tea)

I think the warning is more likely.

ANGELA

(rustling out a chocolate)

What makes you think so?

PAVEL

From my experience of working in the Special Police Unit, I can say that professionals don't miss.

ANGELA

You think it was a professional?

PAVEL

Yeah. He was probably in a half-built building across the street.

ANGELA

How do you know?

PAVEL

It seems like an obvious place to hide. From there the shooter had a clear view of the street.

ANGELA

I see.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOSCOW – NIGHT

A piercing wind drives clouds of swirling snow along the street. An endless procession of cars crawls along it.

A snow-grimed taxi pulls over and stops by the curb.

MacBride gets out and, struggling through the snow, walks down the street.

His mobile BUZZES.

MacBride takes the phone out and glances at the screen.

INSERT —

a local number.

BACK TO SCENE

MacBride answers the call, his breath fogging the night air.

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

Yes?

THE GENTLEMAN (V.O.)

Monsieur MacBride, this is Jacques Moreaux.

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

Ah, Monsieur Moreaux. Bonjour, or what do you say up there?

THE GENTLEMAN (V.O.)

Bonsoir. How is Mademoiselle Angela?

MacBride shields his eyes from the swirling snow.

MACBRIDE (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Mademoiselle Angela is very well as far as I can see.

THE GENTLEMAN (V.O.)

I'm glad to hear that.

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

Except that there seems to be a little misunderstanding.

THE GENTLEMAN (V.O.)

Which one, Monsieur MacBride?

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

Apparently, the note you gave me wasn't from her.

THE GENTLEMAN (V.O.)

That's right, Monsieur MacBride.

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

But why did you say it was?

THE GENTLEMAN (V.O.)

How else do you think I'd persuade you to go to her flat?

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

Is this some sort of freaking game?

THE GENTLEMAN (V.O.)

I think you can call it life, Monsieur MacBride.

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

Yeah, maybe, but what's in this game for you, Monsieur Moreaux?

THE GENTLEMAN (V.O.)

The security of Mademoiselle Angela.

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

Well, then why haven't you protected her?

THE GENTLEMAN (V.O.)

What makes you think I haven't?

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

If you had, she wouldn't have ended up in hospital.

THE GENTLEMAN (V.O.)

Perhaps, she might have ended up in a much worse place than that.

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

I see, though it doesn't make sense to me.

INT. RESIDENTIAL BUILDING (MOSCOW) – NIGHT

Faded blue walls display patches of peeled off paint. The worn-out terracotta tiles of the floor bear traces of dark grey slush.

MacBride enters, adding a fresh trail of slushed foot prints.

THE GENTLEMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Monsieur MacBride, I would very much appreciate your further co-operation.

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

My further co-operation in what?

MacBride shakes snow off his coat. The mobile slips out of his hand and HITS the floor.

The line goes QUIET.

MacBride picks his mobile up and walks into —

THE LIFT

He presses the third-floor button. As the lift goes up, the light flickers.

His mobile RINGS. MacBride hits ‘answer’.

MACBRIDE (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Yeah?

PAVEL (V.O.)

Hi Mac, it's Pavel.

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

Hey man, what's up?

PAVEL (V.O.)

I did some checking around.

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

Yeah, what about?

PAVEL (V.O.)

(into the phone)

Kazimir Stankevitch.

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

Oh yeah. And?

PAVEL (V.O.)

He owns a hunting lodge in Finland.

MACBRIDE

(into the phone)

Lucky dude.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KAZIMIR'S OFFICE (MOSCOW) – NIGHT

In the middle of the room a glass desk stands. Kazimir sits at it, facing the floor-to-ceiling windows. A cigar smoulders between his fingers. The wall behind him is covered with gilded icons.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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