

# Morozov and Me

## IMPORTANT CHARACTERS:

Nick - a computer programmer unexpectedly, drawn into the plot, obviously based on myself, but going to graduate school in a technical field.

Morozov - a humorous Russian agent captured by the US

Strange Dude - Carl, works for an unknown agency

Strange Woman - unnamed, works for an unknown agency

Emma - Nick's friend, a law student

Professor - Emma's constitutional law professor

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## SCENE ONE: THE APARTMENT

*Daybreak in a messy corner apartment. Our protagonist, Nick, is brushing his teeth and refreshing the traffic analytics on a computer screen.*

NICK

[counting] mm mm hmm, mm mm hmm mm

*Nick clicks a link to a YouTube podcast, which starts auto-playing.*

PODCAST GUY

And this is one of the funniest things that I've seen, it's a web site where to access anything you have to write commands...

PODCAST GUY 2

Yeah...

PODCAST GUY

...in Fortran.

PODCAST GUY 2

Sorry, uh... what the fuck?

*boing sound effect*

PODCAST GUY

So everyone is trying to look up how to write Fortran and get through the puzzle to the end.

*Nick goes into the bathroom and returns washing his face.*

PODCAST GUY 2

But aren't all Fortran coders from like thirty, fifty years ago? Ain't nobody got time for that. My grandpa is going to win this puzzle before-

*Nick stops the video, packs the laptop into his bag, and leaves.*

MONTAGE shows Nick biking onto a college campus, sitting in class checking Twitter for more traffic, getting hungry and going alone to a diner for lunch.

SCENE TWO: BURGER PLACE

*At the counter of a busy 50s-diner-themed restaurant, Nick is idly watching statistics on his phone. The server places a macaroni-and-cheeseburger in front of him.*

NICK

Thanks, that looks good.

*STRANGE DUDE and STRANGE WOMAN sit at the counter on either side of him.*

STRANGE DUDE

Hey, what's that you're having?

NICK

It's a macaroni-and-cheeseburger, like a cheeseburger but the topic is macaroni and cheese.

STRANGE WOMAN

I'm going to be honest: that sounds disgusting.

NICK

It is, but at the same time, it is so good.

*Nick deliberately takes a big bite to show how he enjoys the burger.*

STRANGE DUDE

I am totally going to order this.

STRANGE WOMAN

I can't... okay. I won't talk to you, though.

NICK

Do you know each other? I mean, if I'm in the way..?

*Nick looks to either side to see that there is plenty of space, and Strange Dude and Strange Woman are staring at him.*

Never mind?

STRANGE DUDE

Nick, we were wondering if you could answer some questions about your code.

NICK

What? Oh weird. I mean, I would be happy to, but I'm eating. Why didn't you contact me at work?

STRANGE WOMAN

Universities have all these policies about these things.

NICK

What kind of things?

*Strange Man and Strange Woman shrug*

STRANGE WOMAN

I guess, recruitment?

NICK

This research program goes for another year but after that, I can talk about-

STRANGE DUDE

It's more like... national security stuff?

NICK

You guys are so confused, I am studying game development now.

STRANGE DUDE

We're not interested in the game development thing. It's about the Fortran site.

NICK

I can't really talk about that! It's a competition. I can't give away the answers! Come on, guys.

STRANGE WOMAN

Oh, okay, funny little competition.

NICK

Mmm yeah.

*A waiter arrives.*

STRANGE DUDE

A macaroni and cheeseburger for me and the lady.

STRANGE WOMAN

I would prefer to have a Denver omelette.

WAITER

Got it.

STRANGE WOMAN

So have you noticed if people are using the site?

NICK

Well yes, sort of a lot.

STRANGE WOMAN

Suppose someone in Los Alamos saw your site, and had some questions.

NICK

Los Alamos, like the town?

STRANGE WOMAN

Los Alamos, like the nuclear research program.

NICK

Listen, one of the main reasons that I got into game development is that I didn't want to make something that would end up killing someone. No recruitment.

STRANGE DUDE

Nuclear research doesn't kill people.

*Nick looks confused, and looks to the Strange Woman, who also looks confused.*

I mean, if your research ever did come to kill people, the world would already be fucked. It's not like you're going up to someone and \*pop\*.

*Strange Dude mimes shooting someone*

STRANGE WOMAN

Not the time, Carl.

NICK

Yeah I don't get that.

STRANGE WOMAN

So have you been in contact with anyone at Los Alamos about your project?

NICK

What? This is the first that I heard about it. I didn't realize that you guys, your team would still use Fortran. I mean... I get it. But it's also a real mess. Super old.

STRANGE WOMAN

But we don't work at Los Alamos.

NICK

Oh... rightttttt

STRANGE DUDE

No, really, we don't.

NICK

What is this all about then?

STRANGE WOMAN

You're about to get served some papers.

STRANGE DUDE

Something really serious.

NICK

Served... papers?

STRANGE DUDE

Some legal stuff that will not be fun.

NICK

Does someone own Fortran? Am I not allowed to have a website *Fortran-dot-io* anymore? I can give it back but I should get my fifty bucks back, too.

STRANGE WOMAN

Nope, Espionage Act.

STRANGE DUDE

You are so fucked.

NICK

What?

STRANGE DUDE

You'll want to call us later.

*hands Nick a card with only a phone number on it  
to waiter*

Please can I get my burger to go?

NICK

You're going to tell me about the Espionage Act and then leave?

STRANGE WOMAN

I think it's best if you get the papers first, so that you know to believe us. We'll keep an eye on you to make sure that you don't leave the country.

NICK

*goes back to his lunch*

Well, I'll keep an eye on you, too. Or something.

*Strange Dude and Strange Woman leave. Doorbell dings.*

What is wrong with people?

SCENE THREE: THE APARTMENT ENTRY

*Night time. Nick looks around and cautiously checks his postbox.*

NICK

Oh. Nothing.

*We follow him up the stairs and to the door of his apartment, where a box is waiting.*

Oh shit.

SCENE FOUR: THE LIBRARY

*Nick meets with a law student friend that night. The box is opened and they are looking at the first packet.*

EMMA

This all looks very serious.

NICK

But they're fake, right? I mean I don't understand how they're planning to get the answers to the puzzle this way, but-

EMMA

Forget about the puzzle! Everyone named in this letter is a real lawyer at the Department of Energy. You can call in the morning and double-check it in an instant. Which makes me think, what I need you to do first is: don't leave the country.

NICK

Uh, okay, easy to do.

EMMA

And don't contact anyone at the Department of Energy for any reason.

NICK

You just said that we could call them and ask-

EMMA

I know! Okay it's better if I do it... No, wait, I'm not a lawyer yet. Have your lawyer call them.

NICK

I have a cousin who finished law school, I think, but he didn't reply to my message yet. Could be like a *My Cousin Vinny* situation.

EMMA

No, a national security lawyer! You should know this stuff before you talk to anyone!

NICK

They came to me!

EMMA

Who?

NICK

I don't know, two strange people. Man and a woman.

EMMA

They didn't tell you who they were?

NICK

They gave me a card, oh, here it is.

*Nick presents the business card.*

Just a phone number, not a lot there to go on.

EMMA

You know who leaves anonymous cards around and knows about national security shit?

NICK

Who?

EMMA

The FBI? NSA? CIA? Could be any or all of them. Let's get you to my professor.

SCENE FIVE: THE PROFESSOR'S OFFICE

*The professor is looking through the files and sorting them into stacks.*

EMMA

-and then he received these documents here.

PROFESSOR

Right, right, these documents.

NICK

So they don't really have anything to do with me, do they?

PROFESSOR

Before I talk to you about this, I am going to need a payment to establish attorney-client privilege.

NICK

I saw this in a TV show once, hold on, I think I have a dollar.

*reaches in the pocket*

PROFESSOR

No, I will need you to write a check or money order for eight hundred dollars.

NICK

Wait, what?



PROFESSOR

And I think it will take me a few hours to get through the details and make a strategy with you, so at least twenty-four hundred dollars.

*Nick looks astonished.*

NICK

Can you give me a few minutes to see if I can do that?

PROFESSOR

Of course.

SCENE SIX: THE HALL

NICK

Twenty-four hundred... shit, how is my cousin not responding yet?

*Nick reviews the Strange Dude's card.*

They might have something.

*Nick dials the number. A phone rings and Strange Man and Strange Woman burst out of a door across the hall, carrying listening equipment.*

SCENE SEVEN: THE APARTMENT

STRANGE WOMAN

So we did some research and realized that you weren't involved in sending messages to scientists at Los Alamos. They were finding, downloading, and sharing your code, voluntarily. *(mocking the scientists in a funny voice)*

Oh, isn't this funny, oh take a look at this Fred, let's run this code on the big mainframe and see what happens.

STRANGE DUDE

We realized it might be good to have a chat before the Department of Energy threw you in jail forever.

NICK

Forever?

STRANGE DUDE

You broke a nuclear testing supercomputer. We almost told the president.

STRANGE WOMAN

Who knows what could have happened?

NICK

What people do with my code is not my fault or liability or something. It's in the license.

STRANGE DUDE

Open source licenses don't matter when you break something this big.

NICK

What are they going to do, sue me for damages? Ask me to fix it..?

STRANGE WOMAN

The budget for this whopper supercomputer is itself hella classified, so they would just put you in jail. For espionage. That means no trial. Just SuperMax oatmeal for the rest of your life.

NICK

Oh shit.

STRANGE WOMAN

Could you do it again?

NICK

What?

STRANGE WOMAN

So, our boss had a conversation with the Secretary of Energy-

STRANGE DUDE

-like, the Secretary of Energy for the United States of America-

STRANGE WOMAN

And they were wondering if you would do it again.

NICK

No, no of course, I'll stop writing code altogether if that's what you want. I hate oatmeal.

STRANGE DUDE

No, man, they **want** you to do it again.

NICK

I don't understand. Are you...

*jumps up from chair*

oh my god you want me to break into Los Alamos and...

STRANGE WOMAN

No, no, sit back down! Let me spell it out: the Russians have their own supercomputer. It does some... some not-nice things.

STRANGE DUDE

Very bad things.

STRANGE WOMAN

We would all sleep a little easier if this computer... stopped working.

NICK

But I don't know anything about their Russians or their computer or... you didn't even tell me what not-nice things it does?

STRANGE WOMAN

Suppose we had a line of code which would make their machine seg-fault.

NICK

Well, that would be a start.

STRANGE WOMAN

So here's what we are picturing.

*same mocking voice used for scientists earlier*

Hey Boris, it's another sunny day in Mother Russia. Check out this funny Fortran program.

NICK

The Russians would run my code, too?

STRANGE WOMAN

Well, no. They're a little more cautious than our scientists.

STRANGE DUDE

This is the cool part. You are going to write your code in Russian.

NICK

This is why the plan doesn't work. I don't know anything about Russia, it will look wrong.

STRANGE DUDE

We will bring someone by tomorrow... sort of a... how should I say it? One of our newest Russian agents, who will be your intern advising you about how to let their guard down. It will be funny, just like your program.

NICK

I get a Russian humor intern?

STRANGE DUDE

Uh-huh.

NICK

This is straight out of a James Bond movie. This is surreal.

*Nick takes a moment to collect himself.*

This is a dumb question but, dude... James Bond... rookie Russian agent..?

STRANGE DUDE

Oh, I think you'll be great together. Bring some chocolates to our next meeting.

STRANGE WOMAN

Carl!

NICK

*beaming*

I will.

SCENE EIGHT: THE SAFE HOUSE

*Knocking on the door. The door electronically unlocks and Nick walks in from the street, carrying a blue shopping bag. Inside is a box of chocolates.*

NICK

Hello? Anyone home?

STRANGE WOMAN

We'll be down in just a minute. Please take a seat at the table.

*Nick sits at the table. After a few seconds, he takes out a fidget spinner and plays with it. Strange Dude and Strange Woman come downstairs.*

Thanks for coming to meet with us and your new partner. I understand this may be stressful and you may need some time to get to know each other.

NICK

Mhmm, sounds good.

STRANGE WOMAN

Did you actually bring chocolates?

STRANGE DUDE

Oh my god, he did.

STRANGE WOMAN

Can you not do this, Carl? Okay, our partner should be with us in a few seconds.

*There is light treading on steps, then a door opens. MOROZOV, an aging man resembling Sergey Kislyak, staggers through the door.*

STRANGE DUDE

So nice of you to join us! Have a seat.

MOROZOV

Ehhh okay... Just a moment while I find the chair.

STRANGE DUDE

Any seat is fine... any seat.

NICK

Excuse me, are you serious?

MOROZOV

No, I am a joke intern. Get it?

*mumbling*

Oh... still so funny. Still so funny.

STRANGE WOMAN

Look, Carl was just being a dick. Mr. Morozov has agreed to work with us on this project, and we are all appreciating that he would do that for us.

NICK

Thanks a lot, Carl.

STRANGE DUDE

Muzzie, he has chocolates.

MOROZOV

You have chocolates?

*Nick winces and hands over the bag. Morozov sits.*

STRANGE DUDE

The two of you will spend a lot of time together to plan this operation.

NICK

Is he the right guy for this? I mean don't you have someone I might gel with a little better? Carl, my man...

STRANGE WOMAN

We know that Mr. Morozov is the man for the job. He was always deep in the KGB, but he was also a little special... he was also their funniest agent.

*Scene starts a flashback to a young but recognizable Morozov in front of a window, snow falling*

Our agency had a trace on every Russian phone line in Berlin-

NICK

No no no, hold on. I am a little serious now. I don't see this guy getting a bunch of scientists rolling.

STRANGE DUDE

We could ask him to tell a joke.

MOROZOV

My humor is only so good in English.

STRANGE DUDE

Let my partner continue the story.

*Flashback continues.*

STRANGE WOMAN

Finally, alright. The agency had a trace on every Russian phone line in Berlin. Our friend Morozov is moving some secret documents around to some spies, so we tried to follow his movements. It was impossible. My mentor told us that the translators would be on the floor, laughing.

*Flashback shows translators in hysterics.*

NICK

Really.

STRANGE WOMAN

Whatever we recorded, no one could tell if he was serious about going to this location or that, or just planting red herrings. Then the agency transferred in their spy, a guy we call Stoneface.

NICK

Stoneface.

*Flashback shows a tall, bald, expressionless man looking at a wall of pinned papers and connecting threads.*

STRANGE DUDE

I've met the guy at a party. I tried my funniest jokes on him. No dice.

STRANGE WOMAN

He has that reputation. And month by month, Stoneface unraveled the network, put agents in this guy's room, and snap!

MOROZOV

Ah, yes... snap.

NICK

Why aren't we watching *that* movie?

STRANGE DUDE

Just remember that everything that you hear is classified. Especially Stoneface and Morozov. He may look a little worse for wear, but he was supposed to be dead for five years now.

*They look over to Morozov*

MOROZOV

Don't mess this up for me. I like this.

*eating chocolates*

Oh, and a new fidget spinner!

SCENE NINE: OFFICE IN SAFE HOUSE

*The two are sitting in front of a three-monitor display in a large, empty office.*

MOROZOV

Is this what you do for work? Write prank computer scripts?

NICK

Nope. Just a side gig when I'm not in class. How about you?

MOROZOV

I never used a computer until after I got captured by your CIA friends.

NICK

Sorry about that. I think.

MOROZOV

It's fine. No torture. They just gave me some Disney World tickets. And then the computer, they gave me one. If we Russians capture you, there is no Disney World. I even get a new iPad for this project. Did you know that?

NICK

If you Russians capture me? I didn't do anything.

MOROZOV

You know some American agents and you know me, so soon you will be quite valuable to them. Unfortunately you may be captured or interrogated at any time.

NICK

Hello, I am in America, there is no Russian agent coming to scoop me up.

MOROZOV

Of course there is. They probably rotated out my old friends, but I assure you that there are quite a few Russians in this city. Kidnapping, home invasion, blackmail, all possible.

NICK

You're serious?

MOROZOV

This Carl, and this sexy lady spy, they are such amateurs. Already they should have someone to watch your house and your children.

NICK

I just have a little apartment and zero kids.

MOROZOV

Then make sure to at least ask these amateur spies for money! Your wife will be happy and when you go into Witness Protection, plenty of time and money for the kids.

NICK

No, I am not married either. Witness protection?

MOROZOV

Hold on, shut up, shut down the computer. We need to get out of this house.



NICK

Are you allowed out of the house?

MOROZOV

Of course, I am usually too afraid of the spies. But I will take a grenade for you, my partner.

NICK

Take a grenade, like... meaning...

MOROZOV

You brought some chocolates, I think it is a kind gesture. We can be friends.

#### SCENE TEN: THE INDIAN RESTAURANT

*It's a busy buffet restaurant. Morozov and Nick enter and the staff recognizes Morozov.*

MOROZOV

My nephew.

*Indicating Nick*

MANAGER

Nice to meet you!

NICK

Yes, thank you!

*As soon as they sit at the table:*

Your nephew?

MOROZOV

Spies tell lies, it's my bad habit. As you can see, this is a buffet restaurant. We can eat immediately.

NICK

Hmm.. I am hungry...

MOROZOV

Also very unlikely to be killed here. To poison me, a spy would need to take out everyone else here.

*Nick covers his mouth and winces, grossed out.*

Even I am not worth that much paperwork. Nothing to be worried about.

*Nick and Morozov return to eat.*

*Nick's phone buzzes*

NICK

Hold on a sec. I need to take a photo of the food.

MOROZOV

Oh really, are you an artist?

NICK

No, it's this woman that I used to work with, she really likes Indian food. She's going to be so jealous.

MOROZOV

Why not invite her over? I will be polite and then when you give me the signal [exaggerated wink] I leave for an important appointment.

NICK

I am sure that you're an excellent wingman, but she is on the other side of the country now.

MOROZOV

What is the point of that? I don't understand you young Americans. And I hear it is the same in Russia now, too. The first thing about relationships is, you must ask the girl out in person. A letter is always lost in the mail. And you are left waiting and waiting.

NICK

I don't know why you are so focused on this.

MOROZOV

The letter is in the mail, and you are waiting, and then the CIA comes and moves you away before you get the reply.

NICK

Oh my god, is that what happened to you?

MOROZOV

Maybe.

NICK

I am sure you can see her again. Or she can come over to the US from Russia, once things are more chill.

MOROZOV

Ah, she is already in the US. She is married to the man they call "Stoneface".

NICK

Harsh! But now I definitely want to see this made into a movie...

MOROZOV

Ah... maybe she did not like my humor.

NICK

I don't understand Russian, so I couldn't judge.

---PREVIEW OF NEXT EPISODE---

MOROZOV

I am telling you, this Anastasia could be a Russian spy! You should find out before it gets too serious.

NICK

It wasn't even a date, it was just us hanging out, alright? We made plans to cook dinner at her place next time, though.

MOROZOV

Oh, that is very slick. Have the sexy lady spy check her out to make sure it is not a trap.

NICK

Alright...

MOROZOV

And not Carl! He would fall for it.

--at crappy buffet dinner with Anastasia, Morozov wanders in--

NICK

Oh man, what are you doing here?

*hugs and whispers in his ear*

What are you doing here?

MOROZOV

I have just one thing to say.

*Morozov whispers in Russian to Anastasia, who bursts out laughing.*

Ah, so you are Russian, then?

ANASTASIA

Oh no, Nebraskan. I went to an exchange program in a Russian city for a summer.

MOROZOV

Did you have a Professor Korolev?

ANASTASIA

It is such a common name! I might have.

MOROZOV

The one that I know, you would remember. He keeps his dog in his bag.

ANASTASIA

I don't know...

MOROZOV

And sometimes he is wearing it around the ears like we cannot see it...

*Anastasia bursts out laughing.*

ANASTASIA

Oh, oh, excuse me, I need to go to the ladies' room for a moment.

*She leaves.*

NICK

What are you doing?

MOROZOV

Hello? She is a confirmed spy. Professor Korolev is notorious at my old school. We must leave before she kills you.