Operation Opal

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The year is 2017, the U.S has been at war with North Korea for about two years. All that is needed to end the war is the death of a dictator. But can the U.S operative "Sarah Labelle" follow through?

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â Who are you really?â The man asked me as he looked at me a second time. I didnâ t answer, I was just scared of what Iâ d have to do if he found out the truth about me. True, the mission was near completion; I only had to shoot him for it to be over. I fingered the .22 caliber pistol that was strapped to my back with the belt I stole from his closet. He spoke again.

â I said who are you.â

â I told you, my name is Sarah Labelle.â

He sneered at me. â Nice try, the U.S. Embassy has never heard of you.â

My heart raced; I had been trained to do this back at basic training but had never actually taken someoneâ s life. The only reason I was sent here was because of pure luck and my ability to speak Korean, which I picked up in high school. The CIA wanted to send someone else with more experience but my commanding officer, Sergeant Grattan, had insisted. Right now, I hated Grattan. I first met him in October 2016, after we had been at war with North Korea for about two and a half years. I was drafted six months prior to that meeting. I was a college student at Michigan State University studying veterinary medicine when my roommate came bouncing in with a letter from the White House addressed to me. Before I opened it I knew what it was: my draft notice. I needed to report to the nearest military base and take a physical exam so my future could be decided. Long story short: I passed the physical, was recruited for a special mission dealing with North Koreaâ s big shots, and now Iâ m in the office of a very irritated North Korean asking for my name. His name was Kim-Jong Un, the big cheese of North Korea. Why was I in his home office? Answer: Iâ m a very good persuasive speaker. His shouting interrupted the trip down memory lane. This time, he said

â What is your real name?â

â Sarah Labelle.â

He sighed. â Listen miss, I can do this all night but I want your name. Itâ s 11 oâ clock at night on a Friday. I want to go to sleep. My wife is waiting for me; we need to â secure North Koreaâ s futureâ .â He smiled as he said that last part, the dirty bastard. I knew all too well about his activities with his wife, Ri-Sol Ju. Kim-Jong IL recruited her for the position of wife, and so far Kim-Jong Unâ s mean asshole of a father has been deemed pretty poor at picking wives for his kids, since Ri-Sol Ju has been a major bitch to me since day one of my captivity here and has yet to produce a son. In case youâ re wondering, yes, he tried to â secure North Koreaâ s futureâ with me too. He was able to take no for an answer for about two months before I ended up doing it with him with his wifeâ s complete knowledge of the whole thing. So far, I havenâ t gotten pregnant with North Koreaâ s future. But for all I know, I could be pregnant already. I sigh and I looked back at the man I ended up losing my virginity to, a very short yet pudgy man with a napoleon complex. Great. He sighed back and said wearily

â I know your name is not Sarah Labelle, the U.S. Embassy has no record of any Sarah Labelle being drafted into the military.â

I lied again, probably for the fifth time today, and replied. â I enlisted. You wonâ t find me in the draft records.â

â Yeah, I checked the Army data base too. They donâ t know who you are.â

I snorted with laughter and said, â Of course I wonâ t be there. Iâ m a POW remember? Iâ m probably under the MIA section or something. Maybe the DOA files.â I laughed at the stupid joke I made and then stopped as soon as I saw that he wasnâ t laughing, in fact, he was quite angry.

â This isnâ t funny. Iâ ve trusted you enough to live in my home for six months. I even trusted you to help secure North Koreaâ s future in case of my tragic death. I do a little search for you with the name you gave me and nothing shows up. Now tell me your real name or Iâ ll get the State Security Department to put you back in Camp Fourteen.â

I swallow hard. Camp Fourteen was where they put people who have committed loyalty crimes against North Korea but recently it houses American POWs. To say conditions were inhumane would be an understatement. Iâ ve seen stuff there that I still canâ t get out of my head, and probably never will. My first night on campus was full of treats such as the 14-hour stress hold, the â house of waxâ , and the ever popular â slap them till theyâ re sillyâ . The State Security Department is North Koreaâ s secret police. Think of them as a Korean Gestapo, only they donâ t hunt Jews, they hunt Americans and disloyal North Koreans. I was captured after a string of unlucky events that ended with me standing in the lobby of a State Security Department base. The officers couldnâ t believe their luck. I was tackled to the ground and restrained until their bus came to tell them what to do. I still think that they had a great laugh over that in the locker room after their shift. I was then placed in Camp Fourteen and ended up here, in Kim-Jong Unâ s house, after I bribed my way up the chain of command and convinced the big boss to let me serve out my sentence in his captivity. Why would he want that? Because it would make the U.S. look really stupid. He bought it hook, line, and sinker. I guess hate really does make you stupid and blind.

He gives another evil smirk â Youâ re pregnant arenâ t you?â

â No. Not yet anyway.â

Now heâ s laughing â You are so, I can sense these things.â

â Iâ m not, you must be sterile.â

That was a low blow. His fertility was a touchy subject since in the past five years of trying to have kids, specifically a son, he and his wife have had one daughter who is now in China somewhere because at two years old, she was declared a disappointment and sent to China as an orphan. No one knows where she is, the best guess right now is that sheâ s still in China, but since no one has bothered to check, no one knows. He clears his throat and gets out of his enormous leather chair to lean close to me, his favorite scare tactic. Since most people are scared of him, this works quite often. Iâ m not however, so itâ s pretty much useless. Most people think Iâ m crazy for not being scared of him, but I stopped being scared of anything after I was captured and dragged to Camp Fourteen to await a trial that everyone knew was a fantasy. Heâ s right in my face now; I can feel his breath on my face. Pak-Un, as he likes to be called, is pissed now. I havenâ t given him what he wants and thatâ s the worst thing to do to him. As the favorite son of the late Kim-Jong IL and the supreme ruler of North Korea, heâ s pretty used to getting to whatever he wants. He growls at me and speaks through gritted teeth.

â What the hell is your name? Who are you really? Donâ t say Sarah Labelle. I know thatâ s not true.â

â Why do you care? It doesnâ t change anything.â

He backs up, sits in his chair again and smirks at me again before answering. â A little birdie told me that youâ ve been leaking secrets about me to the U.S. Army with the help of the maid you call â Amyâ . Why do you call her that anyway?â

I sigh. â You know damn well why. She looks like a girl I used to know who went by the same name. I went to school with that girl, may she rest in peace. As for the little birdie, Hans doesnâ t know what heâ s talking about. Heâ s as dumb as an ox.â

â I never said it was Hans. Now tell me your name.â

I reached for the pistol. I knew it was time. If I missed this moment, heâ d find out my name, and Iâ d be thrown back into Camp Fourteen, regardless of my possibility of pregnancy with a royal baby. Slowly I pulled the pistol out from behind my back and aimed it at his head, just below his chin specifically. It would be a blood bath but would guarantee his death. The bullet would sever his jugular vein, hit his brain stem, pass his medulla; the command center for the heart and lungs, and then lodges itself into the temporal lobe. Once that happens, heâ ll die. I look at his pudgy and terrified face for the last time and say.

â My real name is Sierra Shapratski. It was good knowing you Pak-Un.â

I squeezed the trigger and closed my eyes as the blood, brain matter, and bone fragments rained down and the sound of the gunshot rang in my ears. I clamped my eyes closed for the longest time until I had the courage to wipe the blood off of my eyelids and look at what Iâ d done. He was slumped over the desk, face down, hands by his ears, a pool of blood was slowly growing around his head. His wedding ring was no longer a reflective gold with little diamond chips speckled across the band. It was now coated in blood and tiny bits of brain, most of them no larger than grains of sand. I wanted scream but nothing came out. I was terrified for the first time since being roughed up by the State Security Department. My heart pounded, my head was spinning. The blood puddle around his head was now so large that it was now dripping off of the edge of his desk, making a new puddle on the office floor. The nice white carpet was ruined, the maids would not be happy. I looked around in a panic; no one was at the door ready to return the favor I preformed on the now dead dear leader. I looked out the window that faced the hallway and didnâ t see anyone. Strange. I picked up the phone and placed an intercom call to Amy, the sweet and sympathetic maid I was talking about a few minuets ago. We had become close in the past six months.

Ring Ring Come on Amy, pick up. I need you.

*Ring Ring * I just killed Pak-Un and I need help.

Ring Ring

â Hello? This is Amy, how may I help you Pak-Un?â

â Amy, itâ s not him, itâ s Sarah, please come to Pak-Unâ s office, I need help.â

â Ok, Iâ ll be right there.â She said in her very chipper sounding voice. Only the entire conversation was in Korean so it sounded like this.

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Donâ t worry if you canâ t read that. Most people canâ t. I paced the room until Amy knocked on the door. I opened it just a crack and said to her.

â Iâ ll let you in, but only if you donâ t scream. And after you see it, you must use the black phone to call the U.S. Embassy and tell them that Sierra Shapratski is alive and well and that Operation Opal is all set to go.â The black phone is the cells phone I tampered with until I could get signals from outside North Korea and for a short while, Internet access.

Amy looked worried, â Whatâ s going on Sarah? And who is Sierra Shapratski?â

I looked down at my blood soaked shoes, then back up at Amy. â Are you coming in or not?â

She came in and immediately covered her mouth in order to stop a scream from escaping her lips. My hands flew to her sides and grabbed her in order to stop her from running away. Not that she would have, but it was a precautionary measure I had to use in case she went completely ape shit. She didnâ t, but it took a long time for her to calm down. When she finally did, she had this to say.

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I wonâ t translate it, but letâ s just say that it wasnâ t exactly a very nice thing to say to someone. I calmly replied

â Look, just call the embassy. Iâ ll explain later. Iâ m going to grab something from my room and go wake up Hans.â

She must have recognized that I was not in a mood to argue in light of the situation because she did exactly what I said. Something that until today, she never did. Not to say that I didnâ t respect her. When I first got here Amy and I were doing the laundry when I forgot what I was doing and poured bleach into the machine, ruining the clothes that were in there. Pak-Un was furious. He came stomping and screaming about how stupid people were and how you canâ t trust anyone anymore. He then asked who was responsible for this disaster. I winced in anticipation, my bruises from Camp Fourteenâ s good-bye present hadnâ t healed yet and I was not looking forward to adding more injuries to my extensive collection. But before anyone could answer, Amy stepped forward and said

â I did it sir.â

â You did this?â Pak-Un asked

â Yes sir, I did it.â As Amy said that last sentence it was clear she was scared. Her voice quavered, she was trembling and I could see her eyes watering from where I was standing. Pak-Un just stared at her with his signature evil glare and proceeded to beat her in front of the other servant and myself. I could only watch as he took off his belt and whipped her screaming that she was stupid and ungrateful. Later she explained she did that to protect me from that beating since I was already in a lot of pain. We became friends shortly after that. I gave her the name of Amy because of her striking resemblance to a girl that I used to school with. We were reunited on the battlefield for a short while until a North Korean soldier killed her a week after our chance encounter. The idiot didnâ t even run away after he shot her, he just stood there, wide eyed, from that reaction it was clear that he was a recent recruit who was very new to the battlefield. He stood there, fixed to

the place where he took what was probably his first life until a hail of bullets rained down upon him, courtesy of the girl standing next to me. The sound of the door closing jolted me back to reality. As soon as Amy was far down the hall I ran downstairs to the servantsâ quarters and woke up Hans. Yes, this is the same Hans that I called stupid. Heâ s a really a nice guy and his name isnâ t Hans either. I starting calling him after I found out he spoke German, my motherâ s native language. He has been helping me with Operation Opal and being a nice little informant for the U.S. Army while secretly spitting in the Kim familyâ s food. When I woke him up, Hans was clearly not happy about his rude awakening but his anger quickly turned into fear and shock when he saw the blood that soaked my dress from the shoulders down to the hem line, not to mention the blood that was smeared across my hands, shins, face, and shoes. He sat straight up and scolded me in German with his very strange sounding accent. Iâ m not being cruel by the way; speaking German with a Korean accent will make anyone sound strange.

â What the hell happened? Did Pak-Un do this to you? Iâ ll kill that bastard if he does it again.â

â Already took care of that Hans, I need you to get the pirate radio and rally the troops.â

Hans smiled at me and said â I figured that wasnâ t your blood, from the looks of it, you have about a full liter on your clothes. No way anyone could survive that.â

â Thatâ s fascinating Hans, now get the radio.â

The radio was kept under a lead plate to keep it from emitting anything that the State Security Department might detect. It was fantastically expensive on the black market, making its secrecy and protection a top priority. It could transmit and receive all the frequencies that a normal radio could, unlike the crappy state issued radios that could only receive messages and only those that the state deemed appropriate. Those radios couldnâ t even be turned off, just turned down. But it was go time; if we didnâ t radio the embassy we were screwed. The State Security Department would be royally pissed if they found out about Kim-Jong Un and the radio. How pissed? Well, do the words â spontaneous death by firing squad with no chance of recovering the bodyâ mean anything to you? So Hans got his act together and started to radio the U.S. Embassy in South Korea saying â Operation Opalâ until the night clerk got off his ass and started to make some phone calls, one of them to Sergeant Grattan who got on line two of the black phone and immediately started to berate me for not contacting him, thereby making him worried sick about me. I believe the conversation went like so

â Sierra! What on Earth is wrong with you? I know you were on a mission but you still could have let me know you were alright.â

â Hans sent messages, didnâ t you get them?â

â Yes, but you could have called!â

â Whatever, Iâ m not arguing about this. Do you have whatâ s needed to stir up trouble?â

â Yes, but should I pack my bazooka?â

I smiled; it was our little inside joke, from all the way back when I was in basic training. I knew the correct response for times like these.

â Absolutely. And donâ t forget the hand grenades.â

The sound of Mr. Grattan cheering on the line was overwhelming. So much so, that when he hung up I felt a sense of relief. Now it was just time to play a waiting game. Wait until the U.S. and South Korean soldiers came and captured Pyongyang and the house of the dear leader along with it. Until then, it was time to just wait. I went to the bathroom to clean up. The press was going to want to see a clean, pristine, and strong Sierra to make her debut as a war hero. And I was going to give them exactly what they wanted. It was so strange seeing this house now that I was no longer going to be bossed around by some creepy fat man. I snuck into the creepy fat guyâ s bathroom and took a shower, threw away the blood soaked dress and put on some of Ri-Sol Juâ s clothes. Since she was going to be a war criminal before too much longer, I figured it would be ok if I borrowed something. I slipped the blue sailor dress over my head and my heart stopped. On the counter was a box of pregnancy tests marked â accurate 99% of the timeâ . I figured they were for Ri-Sol Ju, but maybe not. My curiosity got the better of me and I ended up testing myself. So I peed on the stick and put it on counter next to the toilet and watched in horror as the little pink plus sign came up seconds after being peed on. I tried the next one. Same result, the little pink plus was staring at me, mocking me, tormenting me. So I tried the next one, just to be sure. I swear the little pink plus was giving me the finger for the third time, and the fourth and fifth time as well, not to mention the sixth. I slipped out of the room and screamed for Amy, sheâ d help me, tell me it was a mistake. I couldnâ t be pregnant with the child of the man I just killed. It wasnâ t possible. I screamed again.

â Amy! Amy! Amy! Where are you?â

No response. I was getting desperate. I checked the time. 1 AM on Saturday, October 14, 2017. The troops should be here in about 2 hours, but that was just a rough estimate. It could be longer, maybe shorter. No one knows for sure. Grattan knows that Kim-Jong Un is dead but do the troops heading for the rescue mission know? If not, it would be a nasty shock.

â Amy! Where are you?â

I heard footsteps racing towards me and I started crying, something I hadnâ t done in 18 months. Since the draft notice came for me I had found myself unable to cry. I guess that when I found out that I would have to go fight in North Korea and leave my friends, my roommate, and my studies behind to go risk my life, I cried so many tears that I decimated a 18 month supply. Now it was 18 months later and Iâ m crying on the floor of a palace with six positive pregnancy tests in my hand. I should be happy; the war will be over in 2 hours and I can go home. Once the North Korean citizens find out about my evil deed, they would become disheartened and give up. Even if they didnâ t, the U.S. would still have Pyongyang, a good start to finishing the war. The footsteps were coming closer. I looked up and saw Amy with a length of rope in her hand along with a key. I looked up at her through my tear filed eyes and asked with a wobbly voice

â Whatâ s with the rope and key?â

â I handcuffed the bitch to her bed and tied her down for good measure.â

â You restrained Ri-Sol Ju?â I had forgotten all about her. â Why?â

â She might have done something that would have guaranteed your death.â

â Like what?â

â Call Pak-Unâ s cousins.â

Shit. I was glad that Amy thought of that because if that had happened it would be a huge disaster. Amy, Hans, and I would be in hot water. Getting Pak-Unâ s cousins on the phone would be worse than getting the

State Security Department on the phone. The Department would shoot you. The cousins would shoot you, poison you with cyanide, beat you to a pulp, stab you, and then put you in sack that was then thrown into a river. And seeing how this was October in North Korea, the cold would get you before you drowned. Plus, since Pak-Unâ s cousin ran the military, they could get away with it. They might even get a medal for it.

â Anyways Sarah, you owe me an explanation about whoever this Sierra Shapratski is and why the U.S. Army is headed over here.â

â Who on Earth told you about the invasion?â

Amy gave me a cockeyed stare and said, â Who do you think?â

I sighed, if I ever saw Hans again, I was going to slap him. â Sierra Shapratski is my real name. Sarah Labelle doesnâ t exist. That name is a false name I used so that I wouldnâ t exist according to the U.S. Embassy, the Army, and whoever else came looking for me. No one would think to look for a Sarah Labelle since my name is Sierra Shapratski. Iâ ve been here for the past six months so I could kill Pak-Un and finish the war.â

Amy and I looked at each other for a long time after that. Neither one of us knew what to say. Then Amy said the best and worst thing to say at that moment.

â Whatâ s with the pregnancy tests?â

I was half tempted to laugh but instead I explained about North Koreaâ s future and how it was secure now. At least I was if the baby was a boy, which scared me. It was as if Pak-Un was tormenting from behind the grave. At least from his desk anyway, where he still sat as of 11 oâ clock, Friday, October 13. I checked my watch again; the time was 2:45 AM. We had about 15 minuets until the Army started to bust through the door. We tried to spend that time sitting in silence until the Army came but that plan failed miserably because five minuets later Hans showed up with the radio under his arm and smiling broadly.

â I got the radio, now we are all ready to go.â

â Iâ m glad someone is enjoying this.â Replied a very sarcastic Amy.

He didnâ t have much time to come up with a good comeback because seconds later the Army busted through the door and started to do their Army things like snap photos of the dead guy in the office (courtesy of me) and collect evidence needed to convict several high ranking North Korean officials at their inevitable war crimes trials. They also untied Ri-Sol Ju, which was a mistake in my opinion. We were then loaded onto a helicopter and given blankets and coffee. The helicopter was headed to a naval base in South Korea. At the base we would be given medical exams, food, and security until the Army decided what the hell to do with us. During the entire ride all could think was what I could do now with the baby I was carrying. When was the baby conceived? Certainly not during the first session, that was four months ago, I would have noticed before now. The last time I had sex with Pak-Un was about three days ago, but I still remember the first time it happened. I was in his room sitting on the bed after cleaning up some of the clothes that were on the floor. Pak-Un was in the bathroom drying off after a shower. I was trying to fix my hair into a bun when he came out of the bathroom. He was naked. I had seen a naked guy before, donâ t get me wrong; but that was at a college party. The naked guy then was streaking after he had enjoyed too many free beers. It was comical, this was not. I turned my head away from Pak-Un to give him some privacy. I was embarrassed; at the time I figured that he had forgotten his towel. I had no idea of his true intentions. He slunk over to the bed. I freaked out and got off of the bed to leave the room but he pulled me down back down on the bed and got on top off me. I struggled but he was stronger than I was and managed to pin me down just as thought I could get free. I

started to scream as loud as I could; maybe Amy could help me. But the screaming just made him mad. He put a pillow over my face and held it so tight that I couldnâ t breathe. Just as I thought I was going to pass out he took the pillow off my face and said

â Donâ t fight me, you are going to be part of something great.â

I already knew what that something was. He wanted to get me pregnant with his child in order to secure his familyâ s bloodline. Ri-Sol Ju was not having any successes in the kid department and I was the only woman that was unmarried and unknown in the North Korean politics loop. No one would ever know about Kim-Jongâ s sin. I heard fabric ripping and seconds later he had gotten my dress off. I fought as hard as I could he while pulled my legs apart and kissed me on my cheek. I was crying now, I was losing my virginity and I didnâ t want to. During the actual event I just watched the ceiling fan spin around as the headboard kept rhythmically hitting the wall behind me. It seemed like hours had gone by before he finished up and lay down next to me, stroking my hair and kissing me softly. I couldnâ t believe it. He had stolen my dignity and was now acting like I was his wife or lover. I tried to get up but he pulled me back.

â Please stay, I want you to stay for a while.â

â Why?â

â I just do. I want you to stay and lay here for a while.â

â I need to take care of something, I need to go.â

To my surprise, he wasnâ t angry. In fact, he was quite sweet.

â Please stay, it wonâ t be long, I promise.â

I turned over to look at him and saw how sad he looked. I almost felt sorry for him. I lay back down on the bed. He put his arm around my shoulder and sighed. I donâ t know how long I was there, but after a while I noticed he was asleep. I got up and put my dress back on, even though it was ripped all the way up to my mid thigh. I was so sore I could hardly limp back to my room to cry myself to sleep. But I managed to do so anyway without any tears. The next day, he was acting like nothing happened. It was all business as usual in the Kim household. I was furious, and even more so when he took me aside and said

â I loved it last night, please come to my room at 9 PM for a repeat performance.â

â What about your wife? Wonâ t she be mad?â

â Sarah, sweetie.â Pak-Un cooed as he stroked my cheek. I slapped his hand away. I hated being called sweetie, especially by the likes of him. I was just about to leave when Pak-Un said to me

â She knows, and she understands it. She is fine with us being together, as long as she isnâ t there when it happens and the sheets are washed before she comes to bed.â

I stared blankly at him. He respected his wife enough to ask her if she minded that he slept around, but didnâ t respect me enough to ask if I wanted to have sex with him in the first place. I defiantly replied

â What will you do to me if I donâ t show?â

He looked down at his shoes as if he was a little schoolboy getting in trouble for fist fighting. After a long awkward silence he finally spoke.

â Nothing, I just want to see you alone. 9 PM, please be there.â

I was a little shocked by his response. That was probably the kindest thing he had ever said to me. I went to his room at 9 PM like he asked mostly to save my own skin, I wasnâ t much good to the U.S. Army if I was dead or â missingâ , but another part of me was curious about what I might find in there. As I knocked on the door, I was nervous and started to regret coming here. The door opened to reveal Pak-Un, fully dressed this time, beckoning me into the room. I went in and sat down on the same bed where I was raped as the door closed. He sat down next to me and held my hand in his lap. He just stared at me for the longest time before he finally said

â Iâ m sorry. I shouldnâ t have pushed you into having sex with me. I still want to have sex with you, for North Koreaâ s sake and my sake. I enjoyed having sex with you and I want to continue that.â

I whispered a reply, â You raped me. In many courts you would be sent to prison for seven years at least. In India they would castrate you.â

â I know, and Iâ m sorry. I want to make you happy, not hurt you.â

He started to kiss me and then I was pushed down onto the bed. It was like dÃ©jÃ vu: the headboard, the rape, and the cuddling afterwards. I knew then that he could play the role of this sweet guy filled with regret for my rape, but underneath was this manipulative demon that was conniving to get in my pants for the sake of his bloodline. The worst part was that I had no power to stop it as a POW living in his house. He controlled me; I could defy him, but only when he was ignorant of the defiant act. So for the second time in two days, I was raped by Pak-Un. This cycle of rape continued twice a week, sometimes more, for about the next four months. Overall, I was raped about 36 times during my stay in North Korea.

â There it is! Sarah â oops, I mean Sierra, come look at this.â

I looked out the window and saw what Amy was so excited about. The naval base was an aircraft carrier. I had seen them back on base but had never been on one before. Amy had never even been on a boat, let alone an aircraft carrier. If the circumstances were different, I would be happy. But the truth is, we were heading to this base because I had killed someone, someone whose baby now lives inside me. At the base, they gave us check ups and confirmed what I already knew. I was pregnant, about 11 weeks along in fact, almost past the first trimester. When the doctor asked me who the father was, I just said

â You wouldnâ t believe me if I told you.â

â Try me.â

â Kim-Jong Un. I would tell you to ask him but heâ s dead.â

The doctor looked so surprised that it was almost comical. He excused himself and got Sergeant Grattan to come back into the room. When he came in I knew from the look on his face that the doctor had told him what I said about the baby. Grattan just held my hand and said

â I sorry. I shouldnâ t have pushed you or the CIA to get you to go on Operation Opal.â

â No, donâ t be, there was no way you could have know that I would end up pregnant.â

â What are you going to do?â

â What do you mean?â

â Are you going to have the baby? I wouldnâ t blame you if you decided to abort.â

â I donâ t know. I just donâ t know.â I meant that last bit. I have no idea what Iâ m going to do with my life, let alone the life of an unborn child. The doctor gave me some prenatal vitamins and showed me to my room. I started at the ceiling from the bed and reviewed my options:

1. I could abort and never think about this again if I wanted to.

2. I could have the baby and raise it by myself.

3. I could have the baby and then put it up for adoption.

I went to sleep. I wanted to sleep on a decision this big and I was tired. In the morning, I woke up with the answer on my lips.

â Opal.â

That was it. I was going to keep this baby. I donâ t have a problem with abortion, but this was what I wanted. Call it insanity, over active hormones, or a motherly instinct, but I wanted to keep this baby. I had no delusions about the difficulty of single motherhood, but I was going to make this work. This was what I wanted. I got up to go tell Grattan and the doctor, both of who supported my choice not to abort and promised to help me in any way they could. They also told me that the next flight out to America was leaving in about three hours and if I hurried Iâ d make it. I thanked them but told them that before I left for America I had to take care of something. If I was going to take care of one child fathered by Kim-Jong Un, I was going to go whole hog and take both of them with me. Finding her was easy, a quick search for her in the immigration records that had been confiscated from the office and I had her last location. I called the orphanage in Dandong and asked if Opal Kim was still at their orphanage. She was, and I even got to speak to her on the phone. Opal is currently 4 years old, blissfully unaware of her lineage, loves horses, playing in the snow and wants a family. The orphanage sent me a picture of her and said that I could probably adopt her after I get settled with a permanent address and passed a background check. It was going so well that I was extra mad when I found out that Amy and Hans could not come to America with me, and for now at least, they will stay in North Korea trying to rebuild whatever they can. I gave Amy my full and real name along with the last cell phone number I had and told her to look for me if the number was out of order or disconnected. She gave me the address of the refugee camp she was heading to.

â Promise youâ ll write to me?â she said as she handed me the slip of paper.

â I promise.â

â Youâ d better, if you donâ t Iâ ll get Grattan after you.â Amy laughed. It was the first time Iâ d seen her smile in what felt like forever. I just replied,

â Iâ ll send you a picture of the baby when itâ s born. And when they let you into the U.S. I want you to come live with me and be the babyâ s auntie. Iâ ll need help taking care of a baby and Opal.â

â You mean that? You really found her?â

â Yes, I did. Sheâ s happy and healthy. Unaware of her lineage, but I canâ t tell if thatâ s good or bad.â

â Iâ m just more concerned about the â happy and healthyâ part. When that girl was born she was the sweetest little thing. When they shipped her off I was sadder than both of those awful people put together were. And to answer your question, yes, I would live to be auntie to those children.â

Fast-forward 30 weeks. Iâ ve moved to Florida with Opal, weâ ve been here for about five months. The Army let me pick where I wanted to live while I get my life together and I chose Florida, Iâ ve always wanted to live there and I guess Opal did as well since she is so happy here. Iâ m going to have the baby any day now. Opal says I look like a full moon because Iâ m so big. Itâ s a girl by the way; I guess I ended up with the last laugh on that front. Amy was granted a visa to live in the U.S. about 3 months ago. She got on a plane as soon as she heard the news. I didnâ t even know that she had the visa until I got a call from Amy who was standing outside of Orlando International Airport saying that she was granted the visa and needed a ride to my house. I picked her up at the airport and as soon as she saw me we started crying and hugging each other. Opal recognized Amy right away and was very happy that she came back to be her auntie again. Grattan has since retired after the Army told him to and is now working as a teacher at a high school for troubled teens in New Hampshire. His experience as a drill sergeant will make him a great teacher, especially for troubled teens. I send him pictures of Opal from time to time and he sends me notes asking me if Iâ m all right and if he needs to nag the Army about my benefits. The answer is always the same â

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