This Time it’s Personal  Alan Battersby

Summary

New York private investigator Nat Marley arrives at work to find his PA, Stella Delgado distraught over the fact that her younger brother, José De La Cruz, is under police guard at Metropolitan Hospital. He is recovering from head injuries and suffering from amnesia.

Marley reads about the murder of a Brighton Beach businessman, Alexei Romanov, and about two fatalities and a wreck on Jones Beach. He also learns that Captain Oldenberg has charged José with Romanov’s murder.

José’s friends, Miguel and Carlos, tell Marley that José drank too many vodkas and fell asleep in a bar. They left the bar to find coffee, but when they returned José had disappeared.

Marley locates the final bar that José visited. The bartenders seem too frightened to reveal much. Two more bodies are found on Jones Beach and evidence indicates they may be Russian.

The NYPD have forensic evidence implicating José, but no motive or witnesses. Marley suspects that the key to the case lies in the Russian community.

Marley visits a Coast Guard station where Commander Lockhart shows Marley the wrecked boat and autopsy reports on the young men. Marley then speaks with Mrs Romanov who reveals that her husband had received a warning note, signed ‘Victor’, telling him to be wary of someone called Mossolov.

Marley now meets Victor Kamenev who launders money for Mossolov. Kamenev helps Marley to get the full story from the bartenders. José fell into the hands of feared local thug, Nick Zernov.

Meanwhile Stella has been checking Romanov’s computer files. A protected file reveals a series of dates with the initial ‘M’ and names. Mrs Romanov recognises some of these names from her husband’s work with immigrants.

Lockhart shows Marley around the wrecked fishing boat. The boat was probably part of an immigrant smuggling operation. Marley shows Lockhart the dates from Romanov’s file. Some of them correlate with incidents investigated by the Coast Guard. NYPD surveillance photographs show Zernov entering the offices of Mossolov Import and Export, Brighton Beach.

Marley is physically threatened by Zernov, who warns him not to ask any more questions.

José now remembers more about the fateful night and positively identifies Zernov as the guy he met in the bar. A joint Coast Guard / NYPD operation is planned. The immigrants land and are picked up by Zernov. Marley realises where they could be heading.

Marley and the others burst in to a workshop building. Inside are a party of immigrants, Zernov, another man and a woman. Zernov pulls a gun, but is shot. Marley asks the other man if he is Mossolov but he is only the driver. The dying Zernov points to the woman. In fact, she is Mossolov, the person behind the operation.
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Check your reading

Chapter 1
1.  a T, b T, c F, d T, e P

Chapter 2
1.  José with 1Miguel and 2Carlos, had gone to find work in 3Coney Island. The boss at the diner offered him a job as a 4cook and José’s buddies were taken on as 5waiters. Later, they went to 6Brighton Beach to celebrate. José had a 7confused memory of waking up alone in a bar.

Chapter 3
1.  1b, 2c, 3d, 4e, 5a

Chapter 4
1.  a José De La Cruz: charged with murder.  
   b Victim: Alexei Romanov.  
   c Weapon: pistol.  
   d Cause of death: shot to the head.  
   e Forensic evidence: fingerprints on handle and trigger of pistol.

Chapter 5
1.  f, h, i, b, g, a, e, c, d

Chapter 6
1.  a N, b O, c O, d N, e O, f N

Chapter 7
1.  a Lena Rosenthal, b Oldenberg, c the barstaff,  
   d Marley, e Ed Winchester, f Mrs Romanov

Chapter 8
1.  a Stella’s mom, b José, c the dead young men,  
   d US Coast Guard, e Mrs Romanov,  
   f Alexei Romanov

Chapter 9
1.  b, d, e, a, c

Chapter 10
1.  a Mrs Romanov, b Stella, c Kamenev, d Zernov,  
   e Eddie Tilden, f José, g bartender

Chapter 11
1.  a P, b P, c P, d F, e F, f F, g F, h P

Chapter 12
1.  a Lockhart, b Lockhart, c Eddie Tilden,  
   d Kamenev, e Oldenberg, f Tchernov, g Tchernov

Chapter 13
1.  1c, 2a, 3f, 4c, 5b, 6d

Chapter 14
1.  b, c, d, e, f, g, h

Chapter 15
1.  a Combined movements  
   b helicopter  
   c patrol  
   d Fire Island  
   e road exit points  
   f suspicious  
   g unmarked  
   h dusk  
   i Neptune  
   j Marley / Joe Blaney

Chapter 16
1.  As 1Zernov lay dying, he pointed to the woman. She was 2Mossolov, the boss of the operation.  
   3Marley asked 4Oldenberg for permission to question her. She admitted to having ordered the murder of 5Romanov. Oldenberg agreed to the immediate release of 6José. Marley then called 7Mrs Romanov to say that her husband’s killer was under arrest, and also phoned 8Stella to say that her brother was now a free man.