

# Shades of Siberia

Benjamin Valenta

“Fasten your seatbelts please, in five minutes we will be ready for a take-off.” the cold voice announced in a E74-55 plane from Moscow to Orlik airport in Siberia. This was a very unusual flight, because publicly there is no Orlik airport. The reason for such a secret is simple, something very unusual and disturbing is happening in that Siberian region. There have been reports about paranormal things happening in that region. Well, not a region entirely – Orlik only consists of the mines. Flights to this particular airport could take only special strike forces or members of approved Russian organizations, as it was this time.

A group of four people were the only ones aboard this very plane. They worked for a Russian organization called Sevastipol, which was under a full command of Russian ministry of Internal Affairs. Sevastipol’s main purpose is to solve problems which public doesn’t need to know about at all.

The leader of this group of investigators and scientists was Viktor. Viktor was an ex-soldier who served for 5 years in Iran and Afghanistan. When he came back to his hometown – Moscow, he was immediately requested to join Sevastipol investigation department as he was showing uncommonly convincing skills for not only taking a good shot, but also for solving problems quickly and efficiently, no matter the cost. Next two members of the group were twins – Dmitriy and Diana. They both spent their childhood on the streets of Saint Petersburg, until they had been picked up and trained by Sevastipol as their best strike duo. The last one was Valentin, a really smart scientist. He was once a leader of a Science Department but he was degraded due to his mental conditions. Almost everyone in Sevastipol knew he was kind of crazy although he keeps saying otherwise, since he had it approved from multiple doctors that he is completely normal.

The plane finally landed after two hours or so. “What’s the plan, Viktor?” Valentin asked. Viktor checked his watches and said: “We have to find our informant. He is supposed to be waiting in front of the airports’ entrance.

Everyone nodded. They headed to pick up their luggage, with no problem. As they exited the airports' main hall, they found themselves in front of a busy motorway and a small parking lot behind it. As soon as they came out, Viktor noticed someone standing on the very corner of the parking lot. It was a tall yet skinny man wearing beige coat with a dark black hat and a round blurred glasses. "Hey, that must be..." Viktor tried to inform his sidekicks about the potential informant, but as he was about to finish the sentence, a car that just passed crossed his sight with the unknown individual – he disappeared. Viktor tried to figure out what just happened but suddenly a hand landed on his shoulder. "You must be Viktor, right?" an old and scratchy voice asked. Everyone turned back and saw an old, small and a little fat man. "I'm Alexander and I will be your guide to Orlik as your higher supervisor requested me to be. Follow me please.". Everyone started to follow him without hesitation, except Viktor. He checked the parking lot, but as he was expecting, there was nothing/no-one. "Maybe I'm turning crazy too, right Valentine?" he whispered to himself with humour. They all got to armor-pierced Range Rovers and road off to the mountains.

"You know we have got a quite a situation here. I got some good news and bad news. Of course, you are here because of the bad news, but first, let me tell you the good ones: last year we found the biggest oil site in whole Siberia. Isn't it excellent? Well yes it would be, if there wasn't a slight problem. As we dug deeper to find more oil and to access it more efficiently, the miners started disappearing. And when I say disappear, I really mean it. Of course there had been accidents when a miner got hit by a big stone or something like that and just died instantly, but now there is not even a body and what is even more confusing is that the "lost" bodies have nowhere to go in the shafts. The place where we are taking you now is a main shaft, a place where the miners started disappearing recently. We need you to take a look at that and come back to us with a report." Alexander briefly explained.

The Range Rovers suddenly stopped. They have reached the destination. Viktor and his team had to show a little bit of a effort when opening the car doors because of the strong and glacial wind. "There." Alexander shouted through the notional wind barrier as he was pointing his finger on a cubical iron building.

“You have to go down, we will wait for you here by the cars. If anything happens, here’s a transmitter.” Viktor, Dmitrij, Diana and Valentine approached the iron building, opened its’ doors and entered an elevator. Viktor pressed the button, the light on the ceiling blinked and the elevator started going down.

After a few minutes, they finally reached the destination. Everyone got out of the elevator and turned their flashlights on. The shaft was much more narrow than Viktor expected it would be. “Hmm, maybe it’s like that just on the beginning” he thought. “Let’s get moving, so we can get out of this place soon!” Viktor commanded. They continued walking and exploring the mines in hope of finding at least something they could use for further investigation. All of a sudden, an incoming signal came from the transmitter. Viktor turned the volume up and listened. “YOU NEED TO GET...THERE IS SOM...ING...NOW!” a very discontinuous and chaotic voice screamed from the other side of the transmitter – that must have been Alexander! As soon as the contact broke, a huge explosion came from the direction Viktor and his team came. The ground started shaking, the ceiling began to fall apart. “We need to out of here, now!” Viktor yelled. Everyone started running forward deeper to the mines with the whole shaft crashing down behind them and slowly getting closer and closer to them – waiting to just swallow them under the heavy stones. It was impossible to run that fast, Diana slipped and Dmitrij, with hopes to get her up and save her, did not make it too, as his leg was crushed by a huge stone. Viktor and Valentine just continued running.

Viktor woke up. “Wait what? Was that all just a nightmare? Oh thank goodne...” his voice sloped off as he noticed he is still in a shaft, but in a much bigger area than before. “No this can’t be...what the hell happened?” he shouted in despair, trying to remember how the hell did he get here. He tried to get up, but he couldn’t, he realized he was handcuffed! “What the...?” he thought. “Stay still, soon it will be over” and unknown voice whispered to his left ear from a negligible distance...

***To be continued...***