

FOREIGN THERAPY

a Political Comedy

by Kate Cosette

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*Lights up on a conference room where three men, **AMERICA**, **RUSSIA**, and **CANADA** sit around a long, oval table. It's silent.*

America and Russia avoid looking at each other. The single man not averting his eyes is Canada, who is looking from one man to the other, lacking the obvious disdain for his presence.

*All heads turn when a door open. The **MEDIATOR** walks in with a notebook and pen, not bothering to meet any of the eyes directed toward her until she approaches her chair at the head of the table. Scoffing choruses around the room from America and Russia.*

The Mediator observes them.

AMERICA: *(to the Mediator)* I am not giving in to any of his *(points to Russia)* demands.

MEDIATOR: And hello to you, too, America.

AMERICA: How about a goodbye so that we can all get back to our lives? I have a country to run, you know.

America pushes himself up from the table.

MEDIATOR: *(firmly)* Sit down.

America sits reluctantly.

MEDIATOR: All right. America, Russia, I'm sure you know why you're here.

RUSSIA: Unless it's to get him— *(he gestures to America)* — to point his guns away from my country and get their dirty paws off my land, I really have no idea.

AMERICA: *(heatedly)* My guns? You're the one who started threatening us with your nuclear toys for land that is rightfully ours—

Canada raises a finger.

CANADA: If I could just interject here, I—

MEDIATOR: *(controlling her temper)* Not now, Canada...

CANADA: *(ignoring her)* It just seems that—

AMERICA & RUSSIA: *(simultaneously)* SHUT UP!

CANADA: *(cowers)* Sorry, sorry—

MEDIATOR: Enough! Look, gentlemen. We're here because the United Nations decided that before either of you blow each other up, we try a mediation session. Cool ourselves down, huh?

AMERICA: Cool down? *Us?* Please. You don't even know what you're talking about. We are the glue that holds this entire world together. If we don't negate conflicts now, who will?

RUSSIA: It is you who has been the conflict! That land isn't even in America! It is closer to Russia than you.

AMERICA: It's clearly stated in the Bible that land is ours.

RUSSIA: I've memorized the Bible. It does not say that.

AMERICA: It was implied.

MEDIATOR: Enough! Guys, please! Are either of you at the head of this table?

Both Russia and America look less than pleased.

MEDIATOR: ...I'll take that as a 'no'. Here, you two are both equals. I am the head of this conference room.

RUSSIA: Equals? Please!

MEDIATOR: Do I seriously need to get muzzles out for you two? *(to the men)* Okay. Now, I'm going to give you both a chance—both—to explain why you're really mad at each other. Now, when I choose the first person to speak, the other will not interrupt. The other will listen. I will ask you to repeat what the other has said back to them.

The Mediator eyes them both.

MEDIATOR: Points will be lost if it is repeated in a mocking tone.

Both Russia and America cross their arms and humph.

MEDIATOR: Okay. In no particular order, I'm going to ask America first what—

CANADA: Actually, that would be alphabetical order. You said it wouldn't be particular.

The Mediator slaps her forehead with her palm.

MEDIATOR: I am so regretting letting you in. You aren't even supposed to be here. But the UN told me if I brought them I couldn't lock you out.

CANADA: That is so considerate! Dang it, I didn't even get you anything—

AMERICA: It's my turn to talk now, right?

MEDIATOR: Yes. Speak freely.

AMERICA: *(jabbing a finger at Russia)* That stupid son of a—

MEDIATOR: Not that freely.

AMERICA: —*jerk*, thinks he's got better weapons than we do!

MEDIATOR: So?

AMERICA: *(incredulously)* Uh, he doesn't.

MEDIATOR: Why would you care so much if he did?

AMERICA: Because my country needs to have the best!

MEDIATOR: Why?

AMERICA: We are the number one country in the world, we need to be prepared for every country trying to take it from us—

RUSSIA: Number one country? Based on what? Fast food addictions?

MEDIATOR: *(to Russia)* Hey! Rule number one, Russia. No interrupting. You'll have your turn.

RUSSIA: But—

MEDIATOR: *(tsks)* Ah, ah, ah!

Russia slumps in his chair.

AMERICA: ...Anyway, if they just stopped bragging about their toys, things like this wouldn't bother me. But that strip of land belongs to us so we are taking it back.

MEDIATOR: Who said it was yours?

AMERICA: It just is.

RUSSIA: It is not, it's ours!

AMERICA: It is if you can take it from us.

MEDIATOR: Okay, okay, slow down. This isn't working. I need to ask you both a serious question here. Whenever you have a conflict with each other, and neither of you agree, how is it that you solve the problem?

RUSSIA & AMERICA: *(simultaneously, matter-of-factly)* War.

MEDIATOR: Good! An agreement. Finally. Now, what do both of you think of war? Russia?

RUSSIA: It is the honorable tie breaker. One lives by the sword and dies by the sword.

MEDIATOR: ...All right... America?

AMERICA: I want to hit them.

The Mediator rubs her temples.

MEDIATOR: What if I told you that you couldn't solve this problem with war?

Both Russia and America looked flabbergasted.

MEDIATOR: How else would you try to solve this conflict between you?

A pause as they both seriously consider it.

AMERICA: I'd still go to war.

RUSSIA: *(nods)* Same.

MEDIATOR: No! Guys, just level with me here. Humor me. Pretend that neither of you have weapons, the ability to hurt another human being, and we're all immortal.

AMERICA: What's the point of life anymore?

RUSSIA: What happened to the weapons?

MEDIATOR: Guys! Seriously—focus here! You two manage to run countries? Oy. Now, *think*. How else would you two try to solve this conflict between you besides war?

Both America and Russia fall silent. Canada looks eagerly between them. After moments of silence as Russia and America ponder, Canada raises his hand.

The Mediator ignores him. Canada continues trying to get noticed.

After a considerable amount of time, the Mediator sighs in exasperation.

MEDIATOR: Fine, what, Canada?

CANADA: *(breathlessly)* They can talk it out!

Just as the Mediator smiles and nods, both Russia and America burst out laughing.

AMERICA: *(laughing—to Russia)* Hear that? She wants us to talk it out!

RUSSIA: *(laughing)* Oh—oh, my side!

MEDIATOR: Cut it out! I'm serious!

America and Russia sober up, composing themselves.

AMERICA: We don't talk things out.

RUSSIA: What he said.

MEDIATOR: *(mutters)* Yeah, that you agree on. *(to America and Russia)* Okay, here's a new question. What do you think is easier? Talking it out or killing each other?