



Sasha

Will

01.08.2015

The Wedding of Sasha & Will
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In which the grounds for this Union are laid bare, though not as bare as a Babe on the day of its Birth, for that would err on the side of Unseemly.

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In which our Heroes invite you to the Wedding, and lay forth the Necessary Information for you, Dear Reader, to find yourself in the right place, at the right time, on the right day.

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Wherein it is explained to you, Dear Reader, How to Get There – modes of transport, requirements for the issuance of National Visas, hostelries for the purposes of Accommodation, etc.

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Wherein, through a haze of aching limbs, parched mouths, throbbing heads, and tremorous hands, the More Resilient of the guests sally forth for Day 3 of the Festivities, in the form of a Riverboat Cruise and a barbecued Luncheon.

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In which, Dear Reader, your potential questions concerning all matters herein extrapolated upon, are discussed in a Whimsical, though at times Informative, fashion.

PREFACE

It was a dark and stormy night; the rain fell in torrents – except at occasional intervals, when it was checked by a violent gust of wind which swept up the streets (for it is in St Petersburg that our scene lies), rattling along the housetops, and fiercely agitating the scanty flame of the lamps that struggled against the darkness. William was late; as was Thatcher, for the two of them were travelling together to this event (for it was in Kupchino that our mise-en-scene lies). Tired from work, irritated at being dragged out of his comfortable nest in the elegant Baroque city centre, William was an unwilling guest at this event. An event at which, unbeknownst to him, a skulduggerous plan had been hatched to introduce him to a Fayre Maiden by the name of Alexandra (though many of you, Dear Readers, may know her by another name – Sasha). Skulduggerous, because it was also unbeknownst to her that they were to be introduced. And indeed, thanks to the onset of an Autumnal head-cold, Sasha was also an unwilling guest at this event. But Fate, and indeed the hosts, Leo and Katya, would have it that, against their wishes, our two Protagonists attend this event, meet, even exchange words; and against all the odds, share laughs over poorly-remembered jokes in badly-pronounced German, marvel at each other's awkward, too-sober-for-this, hesitant dancing, and exchange phone numbers with a promise to discuss the price of cabbage at a future date.

And so, Dear Reader, it began, on said dark and stormy night...



With thanks to Edward Bulwer-Lytton

CHAPTER 1



Alexandra Valerievna Solomina



William Hackett-Jones



*August 1st
2015*

*Request the pleasure
of your company
at their marriage
at Marientalskiy Prud,
Pavlovsk*

*At
four o'clock*



*with a reception afterwards at
The Grand Column Hall, Pavlovsk Palace, Pavlovsk*



*RSVP
by 30th May*



CHAPTER 2

I'm afraid I'll have to drop the purple prose for this chapter, or we'll be here all night.

i) **VISAS.** You have to get a visa to enter Russia. Your best bet is a single entry tourist visa. In order to apply for a tourist visa, you can either pay extra for an [agency](#) to do it all for you, or to do it yourself, you first need an invitation. Your hotel may provide you one for free, or our good friends at [Visaable](#) have offered us special rates for you: 15 Euro instead of 24 Euro. Please email hello@visaable.com quoting 'Hackett-Jones Wedding', providing answers to the following questions, and Maria will sort you out with an invitation:

- Family name
- First name, middle name
- DoB
- Passport number
- Citizenship
- Visa entry and visa exit dates
- Provisional address of stay in Russia

THIS IS NOT A VISA! It is merely the first step. Once you have your invitation, follow [this link](#) and fill out the application form for a visa. Once this is filled out, head over to the visa processing centre on Gee Street (if you're in London; for Scotland, or farther afield, the procedure might be a bit different: US citizens try [this link](#), Kiwis try [this one](#)). You'll need to leave scans of your finger prints with them. Yes, it's ridiculous, but the Brits thought it up first, so blame them.

ii) **FLIGHTS.** The only direct flights from the UK are BA or [S7](#) (which, funnily enough, is a code-share flight with BA, but costs significantly less), both from Heathrow. Suffolkites can fly from Norwich via Amsterdam with KLM. [Transaero](#) offers the cheapest flights via Moscow. We tend to use www.anywayanyday.com. You're flying to Pulkovo Airport (code LED).

iii) **ACCOMMODATION.** St P has everything, from [cheapie](#) hostels, to [classic 5 star grandeur](#). We have managed to negoti-

ate discounted rates with Rocco Forte Hotels, which owns the 4* [Angleterre Hotel](#), and the 5* [Astoria Hotel](#). They are adjacent, and centrally located on St Isaac's Square, so we will be using The Astoria as our default meeting place for events around the wedding. Contact [Olga Kuznetsova](#) by email, and quote 'Hackett-Jones Wedding' when booking.

Hotel Astoria: Classic rooms – 9 900/ 11 100 RUB for single/double occupancy

Hotel Angleterre: Classic rooms – 6 900/ 7 800 RUB for single/double occupancy

Group rates also include the following benefits:

- Rates are quoted in RUB per room per night and include 18% VAT
- The rates include daily buffet breakfast
- Free use of Sauna, Turkish bath, Swimming pool and 24 hours access to Fitness centre
- Two complimentary bottles of water in the room
- Complimentary WIFI

If you do stay at either of these hotels, they will provide the invitation free of charge.

Additional charges: Passport registration fee at 290 RUB per person

iv) GETTING AROUND ST P.

Download [Uber](#) to your smartphone, and sign up. It is astoundingly cheap in Russia, it means you don't have to try to explain to the driver where you're going, and it means you don't have to carry cash or even a card.

Also, do make sure you go on the metro at some point – it's an amazing experience, deep down under the city, fast and spacious. The most interestingly-decorated stations are on the red line.

v) CONTACTS – LOCAL MOBILES:

Will +7 921 932 4443

Sasha +7 921 317 3056

Henshi (UK Best Man) +44 7742 857 520

Oleg (Ru Best Man) +7 921 960 93 38

CHAPTER 3

Day 1 – Friday 31st July

Below is a list of events for the day before the wedding. Each group will be led by a local friend of ours, who will help with language, navigation, background info, etc.

You are free, of course, to spend the day doing your own thing, but if you'd like to join a group activity and get to know some of the other guests, including Real Live Russians, please consider the options from the list below, and indicate which you'd like to do when RSVPing.

There will also be a pre-party in the evening.

PLAN FOR THE DAY:

- 11:00 Meet at the Astoria Hotel
- 11:30 Depart in groups
- 14:00 Lunch in groups
- 17:00 Return to hotels, rest, freshen up
- 20:00 Pre-party, location to be confirmed.

Activity	Estimated Time	Description	Location	Estimated Cost
Anglotourism	4 hours	Highly recommended walking tours of St Petersburg	Historic city centre	800 RUB
Hermitage	4 hours	The Big One	Historic city centre	600 RUB
Peterhof	All day	Russia's Versailles, it's drenched in fountains, dripping in gold, and a great day out	15 km south of the city, get there as a group by boat, bus, or train	Palace – 550 RUB Boat – 1100 RUB return Train/bus – 100 RUB
Weird Museums or these ones	4 hours	The Kunstkamera, the Museum of Hygiene, the Museum of Bread, the Vodka Museum...	Historic city centre	<1000 RUB
Rivers & Canals	1.5 hours	It's not called the Northern Venice for nothing. Tour the city's waterways, struggle to listen to an inaudible commentary as you go, and see the city from a different angle.	Chug along the Neva, the Fontanka, Kanal Griboedova, the Moika, the little Nevka, etc.	1000 RUB
Rooftop Tour (sorry, it's all in Russian)	2 hours	Speaking of different angles; if you're not afraid of heights, and can squeeze through small gaps, go on a walking tour of the city's rooftops.	Pigeon's-eye views of the historic city centre	800 RUB

CHAPTER 4
Day 2 – Saturday 1st August
THE WEDDING DAY

The ceremony and reception will both take place south of St Petersburg. Buses will be laid on to take you from the Hotel Astoria to the ceremony, and thence to the reception. Buses will also return people to the Hotel Astoria at the end of the evening.

PLAN FOR THE DAY:

- 14:00 Meet at the Hotel Astoria
- 14:30 Coaches depart the Hotel Astoria for the ceremony
- 15:30 Coaches arrive at Marientalskiy Prud for the ceremony
- 16:00 Ceremony, champagne, smiles, and photos
- 17:30 Guests amble over to Pavlovsk Palace for the reception
- 18:00 Guests explore Pavlovsk Park, Russia's first English-style parkland.
- 19:00 Dinner in the Grand Column Hall, Pavlovsk Palace
- 24:00 Coaches depart Pavlovsk Palace for the Hotel Astoria



CHAPTER 5

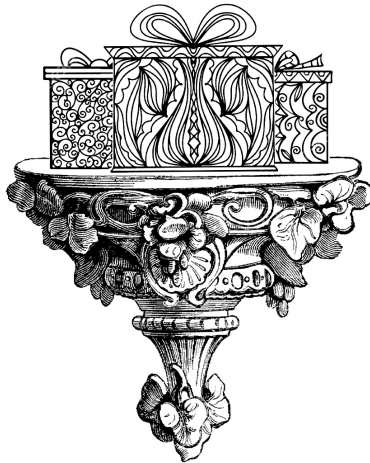
WEDDING PRESENTS

It was a darker and stormier night - if you can believe it - even than that in which we met our Heroes, and indeed in which they met Each Other - though of course, neither as dark nor as stormy as the night that was to follow - but that's a tale for another time.

It really was a darker and stormier night, though, when our Heroes settled down to Consider the Matter of Wedding Presents.

Consider though they did, in quite considerable detail, they could nevertheless find no need for curtains. Nor plates. Nor lampshades; for much of this had already been supplied them by the generosity of the Solomin family.

And so they settled on this [list](#), open as it is to Interpretation; capable as it is of succumbing to your Whims, Dear Reader; vulnerable, as it is, to the effects that the Elements may have had on your mood this very morning. Or afternoon. Or indeed evening, I suppose, if you've spent the day at work, and not wasting company time reading your private emails.



CHAPTER 6

Day 3 – Sunday 2nd August

For those with an iron constitution, there will be an afternoon Meteor ride out to Peterhof, where we'll have a barbecue on the beach.

PLAN FOR THE DAY:

- 12:30 Meet at the Hotel Astoria
- 13:00 Depart on foot (<10 mins) to the [Meteor berth, 2 Admiralteiskaya Naberezhnaya](#), next to Palace Bridge.
- 13:30 Meteor to Peterhof
- 14:00 Barbecue, Frisbee, slumping in hungover stupors, etc.
- 17:00 Bride & Groom depart for their honeymoon



EPILOGUE

Though we have striven to clearly outline all plans for this event, nevertheless, you may still have Questions. We have tried to anticipate some of them here below.

CAN I BRING MY ANKLEBITERS?

As considerate hosts, we have taken the executive decision to give you a much-needed holiday without your offspring. Please leave them with parents, gaolers, or other responsible adults. Small people of under 12 months have been known to slip through our WainFinder 2000 scanning system, and as such blind eyes might be turned in their direction in cases of absolute necessity; but we strongly recommend they be left chained to a radiator, or other suitably sturdy household fittings. You'll thank us for it when you realise that you've still got it in you to stay up after 9pm.

WHEN SHOULD WE COME OUT TO ST.P?

We recommend you arrive on or before Thursday 30th July. This will give you time to acclimatise, find your bearings, and join in the activities on Friday.

WHAT CURRENCY SHOULD I BRING?

You'll get a terrible exchange rate if you buy roubles from your local bank. Just bring GBP, Euros, or USD, and you can exchange them at much better rates once you're in St P, for example [here](#). Otherwise, cards are accepted in most places.

NOW WHAT ABOUT THIS ALPHABET BUSINESS? CYRILLIC, ISN'T IT?

Yes, indeed. You can get an idea of how it works [here](#). There are some signs about the place in English these days. Younger generations speak English quite well, though you might need to ask twice as they can be quite shy about it. If you're Scottish, just write your question down, they've no hope of understanding you otherwise.

I'VE HEARD YOU CAN JUST FLAG A CAR DOWN IN THE STREET, AND THEY'RE ALL TAXIS.

This used to be the case. If, however, you are no good at haggling, and you don't speak Russian, we would recommend downloading the [Uber](#) app to your smartphone, and saving yourself the hassle. Unless, of course, you want an adventure, in which case, go for it. But don't say we didn't warn you.

**I'VE FOUND A WONDERFULLY CHEAP HOTEL IN A CHARM-
ING-SOUNDING PART OF THE CITY CALLED VASILIEVSKY ISLAND,
SHOULD I STAY THERE?**

If you like swimming across shipping lanes, yes. St P has a very picturesque tradition of raising all its bridges at night all summer long. This is beautiful, and all that gubbins, but it is also an epic pain in the wotsit, because there aren't any tunnels. After midnight, you can forget about getting to Vasilievsky Island until 05:00; and if you want to get to other parts of the city that are north of the river, you'll have to go a very long way round in your taxi. So best stick to places on or near Nevsky Prospect and south of the Neva River.

