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SERGEY SOLOVYOV

Sheremetev, the labyrinths of the Kuskovo estate. Secrets of the Illuminati



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«Издательские решения»

Solovyov S.

Sheremetev, the labyrinths of the Kuskovo estate. Secrets of the Illuminati / S. Solovyov — «Издательские решения»,

The story tells about cultural students who unravel historical secrets. One of them is associated with the Kuskovo estate of the Sheremetyev counts. The incredible journey of Count Sheremetywa, which allowed him to understand the secrets of the Illuminati. touch the mystery of Eternal Life, and, most importantly, understand who he is.

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Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. 18

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ISBN 978-5-0071-8021-4
Created with Ridero smart publishing system

Prologue

It was a great summer day, Nikita walked along the tiles of the Italian ponds pavement and looked at the ducks in thoughtfulness. Funny ones, swim back and forth, people who walk through the park throw bread at them, and the birds have another modest lunch. Fortunately for the birds, the locals do not catch these ducks, except for very peculiar citizens, so they live here quite well. They swim along the surface of the pond, move their red paws, wave their wings, so, not much, dive for their duck food, enjoy their simple life. The ponds are bounded by concrete banks, which is not so romantic, but he always liked to walk here after school.

He went further and sat down on an excellent bench, very interesting ladies on skateboards drove past him, and Nikita even slightly pulled his neck, of course, because he was overtraining yesterday. Now the young man went to exercise on simulators, he liked trending in the open air, the sun, the wind blows, sweat less, in short, a great place, but when he came on a bike, he chained his bicycle to the bench, so that later he would not be in vain to get upset about the experience and not return home on foot. He went further, looked to the left, where the building of his beloved GUK MOSGU, where he studied at the Faculty of Cultural Studies, stood behind the pond and fence. The place is great and it lives nearby so it's convenient to get there. But he went to study, there are already a lot of people gathered, probably, and Katka is trending, or maybe Igor will come up. Here are the simulators, he threw a satchel with a replaceable T-shirt, towel and water, and started pressing from his chest. He outweighed the discs on the neck, looked around, and saw that Katerina was doing push-ups on the uneven bars, she was not very weak, with pronounced, but not huge shoulders, and trained, so to speak, hips, and a red oblique on her head, so it was difficult to confuse her with someone. Once, last year, his lady suggested run with her at the cross-country in Kuzminki, this event was called: "Become a man." He became one, almost, of course, but he overpowered his passion for culture, and he climbed over the fence and went to watch "The Sphinx House," this place is amazing, stucco molding, decor, the building made a lasting impression on him. The facade of the building resembles an ancient Egyptian temple. They tried to spoil the day with terribly tedious guards sitting near a beautiful outbuilding rented by a veterinary academy. People could understand, because they showed their need and importance.

They also made an attempt to take up hurdling, but Nikita was more prepared and accurate. The competition ended when the pursuers inadvertently tried to come out on top, they had to be content with second and third places, hanging on the fence, depicting the Scarecrow of the Wise at the beginning of their careers. Nikita heard a lot of new things about himself, and even took out a notebook to write down idiomatic expressions, no doubt important for the development of science. But it was necessary to hurry, and the young culturologist, having made a way out by force, jumped over an obstacle and ended up on a gravel path. Another jerk forward, he was careful and, as always, did not get caught, swung back over the fence from the chain link, and ran past the trees around the pond, so Nikita's day was not in vain. True, Katka got a little nervous, said that he was a little wrong, the young man said that he did not like these runs, well, then he obeyed a little. Okay, the memories are over, the future culturologist was engaged further, the chest press went perfectly, the shoulder does not hurt, everything just went great. Katya went to Nikita, wiped her face with a towel and kissed him lightly on the cheek.

— Well, how are you? — the girl said hello.

— Yes perfectly, now we will work out, and let's go to "Kuskovo"?

— Okay, Nikita, let's go, let's go. I still have half an hour left, I will make a couple of approaches on my back, and we went for sure.

Nikita looked at his Protrek, and spotted the time, it was 14—30, and slowly began to work on his back. They did three exercises, and Igor, their student friend, came up with a knapsack behind his back.

— Hello, and hello, — Igor greeted Katya and Nikita, nodding his head in turn, and wiped his glasses with a napkin, looked with interest at the students.

"Why don't you come here, for free," the young researcher asked, "and the place is different, close to our house."

"Like a case, I'm writing an article about Tozini, but you seem to have gathered at Kuskovo," asked Igor, who studied there, at MOSGU, as an art critic. He was a young man of average height, dressed in a plaid shirt, olive pants and Converse sneakers, and wore glasses in a round metal frame — then I am with you.

— Okay, let's go, — Katerina ended the discussion, drinking water

out of the bottle, and putting the towel in the backpack.

The company went past the ponds, the rays of the sun played on the surface of the water, it was very beautiful around. Step by step, and the company came to the crossing over the road. As always, there were a couple of tuples with newlyweds and friends of the newlyweds. The traffic light turned green, and visitors quickly crossed the road along the "zebra," and went to the checkout window. A woman with glasses was sitting in the window, looking with curiosity at the young people, and finally Nikita came up and paid for tickets to the Hermitage and Grand Palace pavilions.

— Let's go, — he called friends, and they went along the linden alley, along the path leading to the Grand Palace. Nikita liked to look at the neatly trimmed tree crowns, resembling festive balloons in shape.

Nikita called Katya and Igor to the exhibit opposite the church, but without even a small bronze tablet explaining this strange structure for others with an unclear meaning.

— Here, — the young man began to wave his hand, I — you see a copy of the tombstone of a bow from Tsere, and even the inscription is not, it is obvious that Sheremetev saw it in Italy during his trip, probably it was Peter Borisovich.

Katerina approached, creaking with gravel under the soles of Crocs cades, looked unenthusiastically at the pyramid, the square base of the monument, the broken balls of supports in the middle of the monument supporting the obelisk, grinned wryly:

— Everything somehow does not catch, sorry, Nikit, went further.

Igor looked at the church with an angel on the dome of the temple, at the entrances to the church, with stairs in four steps, as he decided that the number four metaphysically means:" Four evangelists leading people to God through the gospel. There are four books in the Gospel." Then he counted four evangelists on the drum of the dome, and looked at them with binoculars, at their ugly faces.

— Eka skewed them. They restored it crookedly, so-so there was a restoration, — he noted with displeasure, — we went further, I need to study the picture, after all, Ghirlandaio Jr. Nobody knows that he is on display here, but I know…

— Well, so beautiful here, — a girl looked back at the Grotto pavilion, the only one present who had nothing to do with art.

Ekaterina Ruseeva was a future computer programming specialist, and she was only interested in the topics of art and cultural studies in the appendix to Nikita's personality.

Nikita took out a tablet, and a photo of a document copied from the original last year in practice in this museum was displayed on his Asus. It was a document about some exhibits in the basements of the Hermitage pavilion, which were not going to be shown to the general public due to their ambiguity. Once again he looked at the important inscriptions on the artifacts, in the photo of two marble products that deprived him of peace. Katya looked behind his shoulder, and slowly monitored further, looking at the photos turned over by the gentleman.

— It's curious, — said the girl, — an evil article will come out of this, — pointing a finger at the photo with little culture, — and not just write to you just by the types of acanthus and meander decor. And where it all lies here, in the estate, I have never seen such things here.

She looked around, bent down and whispered:

— What, vampires found? — and her thumb on the right hand rose in approval, and she smiled broadly.

— You are so observant, Katya, but it's impolite to spy through your hand, — Nikita noticed with a snide smile

— Yeah, my vision is One. Glasses are not needed at all, — Katka shouted at him, and even the tattooed snakes on her hands shook with indignation.

— Let's go to the Grand Palace, — said Igor, trying to smooth out the friction between two excessively hot hearts, — The seventeenth century, the only painting of the artist in Russia, "Madonna and Child."

— Exactly, — the girl said and looked unkind at Nikita, cleaning her Asus, — let's go. It's beautiful there.

— At least appreciated, — the culturologist muttered, — but here we have sphinxes, on a ramp built for carriages. The building is painted pink, made of wood, and plastered. Columns at the entrance in the Ionic style, without canelures.

They climbed the stairs, entered the open doors of the oak doors of the beautiful Palace, and entered the main canopy. Katya looked at the bas-reliefs on the ocher-colored walls with antique scenes, beautiful floor vases, and drew attention to the paired lamps in the form of a girl and a young man on the left and right, in the doors of the corridors leading to different wings of the Palace. Nikita approached her, and began to consider the decor on the lamps, left and right.

— What did you see? Katya asked him impatiently, putting her hands in the pockets of her trousers.

— Well, on the left, we see statues holding torches decorated with ivy, and on the right — acanthus.

— Let me ask you, — he turned to the museum servant, — and what is in the corridor on the right?

"On the right is the library, the armory," the worker answered, putting her glasses in a blue work robe, curiously examining the colorful visitors.

— Thank you, — Nikita thanked the woman, — you see, on the left is the path of sensual knowledge, and on the right is spiritual. Ivy symbolizes the path of knowing the world through feelings, the path of Dionysus, and right — the path of Apollo, the path of spiritual knowledge of the world, and the akant is a symbol of this.

"And the walls, the walls of the canopy," the youth repeated in a whisper, surveying the seven reliefs on the walls, recalling ten images of the Tablinum Villa Mysteries of Pompeii.

Nikita's gaze glided from relief to relief, but only one had an identity with Pompeian frescoes, depicting Cupid. But the idea, the very principle of presenting an artistic image, the internal meanings of the image, conveyed by the artist and the architect, were identical. But seven? Blank depicted seven fragments, apparently similar to the Seven Muses, the Companions of Apollo. And each relief carries an inner meaning similar to the inner content of a certain muse.

— Okay, let's go to the pinakothek, — Igor added impatiently, preparing his faithful tablet, indispensable Huawei, with two gigs of RAM. They walked through the rooms, drew attention to the Raspberry Living Room, a room that cannot be missed without admiring the interior, and came to the collection of rarities, and Igor looked at his Ghirlandaio, a small painting hanging on the wall on the left, among other masterpieces of the collection. And underneath it… How dare he not notice this miracle before! Otto van Scrik, the great Symbolist, "Thistle Landscape." All his paintings were devoted to this plot, the roots of which are in Cicero's proverb" Through thorns to the stars." A whole

wall, to the very ceiling was occupied by magnificent canvases, originals of artists of Europe from the 16th- to 18th-centuries. Katya read brief information about the paintings on the stand, while Nikita watched out the window as people flocked around the park. Igor took several pictures of the figure of a woman with a baby on his tablet, adding the saved one to his gallery. They went all the way to the dance hall, Nikita only looked at the ceiling, appreciated the painting, and only wrinkled his eyebrows, but the images and their understanding did not come, so far even he could not understand everything.

"Now great," the bespectacled man muttered as he hoisted his steals back on his nose, "enough for an article.

— Nikita, did you want to go to the Hermitage? — asked Katya.

— Yes, there is time. And you can sit and eat comfortably on the benches, next to the busts of the alley.

"For sure, I want to eat," Igor said, "but I bought a couple of burgers for you," he said, showing the packages, "a hundred re from you. I am not a rich man — and extended my hand for money.

Nikita grunted with understanding, and gave two hundred for two.

— Thank you, I didn't forget about the Camradov, — Nikita patted his friend on the shoulder, — let's go or something.

They walked down the stairs to the Park's regular garden, a place repeatedly filmed in a movie, past two white lions lying with their faces facing each other, and tearing their jaws, however, completely fearless. There was a memorial obelisk, and the whole Pantheon began in the open air, with paired statues of gods and goddesses, and in the center of the whole composition was a large statue of the god Scamander, a man, according to myths, awarded deification. And closer to the Orangery, a statue of Minerva was erected on a high pedestal, symbolizing the wisdom of the world and secrets hidden in the location of the alleys and statues of the park. The statue of Minerva betrayed Count Sheremetev's enthusiasm for the teachings of the Gnostics. And in the garden of the villa in Stra, in the center of the Labyrinth, there is the same statue, on a high pedestal with a viewing platform. The suffering Hercules, covered in skin, looked at them reproachfully, but they also passed Venus and Plutos, in the direction of the alleys, symbolizing the pursuit of happiness, wealth and love. With a slow step, the trinity walked along the path, and Nikita thought that the bust of Sibylla, a young girl with an upturned nose, smiled at him, promising an early solution to the mystery. The young man looked more closely at the bust and pedestal, decorated with acanthus and palmette, signs of overcoming difficulties and rebirth.

— What did you see? — Katya asked him, slamming the young man's hand, — what new found?

— I looked more closely at the pedestals of the busts, and here there is a pattern, the image of acanthus and palmettes, and volutes on the pedestal, — and he pointed with his hand at the relief signs, — acanth- overcoming difficulties, palmetta — revival, this sign crowned all the ancient temples of Hellas, and volute — the sign depicted on the capitals of the columns, as you can see, serving as the basis and acanthus and palmette giving rise to them.

Igor looked at his friend, wrinkled his eyebrows a little, and they sat on a cast-iron bench and took out their food.

— The benches here are also beautiful, — the girl appreciated, sitting right on the cast-iron curls of the whimsical casting, — and the statues are paired

"Everything is beautiful here," Nikita added, looking around the beautifully trimmed bushes and trees, and the cart with dark red wheels that slowly drove past them. He all mowed back to the Hermitage pavilion, guarded by busts of two virgins. But I wanted to eat, and the three of them simultaneously dug into their burgers, getting untold pleasure from their uncomplicated taste.

"I love KFS more," Katya said indistinctly, "Sosa sola and chicken burgers.

— Yes, and these, from BurgerKing nothing, — added Nikita, — thank you, Igor, did not let starve to death.

— Yes, what are you talking about, — answered their comrade, smiling, — a sacred thing.

Even seemingly simple food, in a good place and good company turns into something extraordinary.

They finished off, wiped their face and hands with napkins, and approached a golden building decorated on top with a figure with a developing ribbon in hand. Friends walked along the alley, but Nikita decided to lead friends around the building in order to show all the beauty of the facade and balconies of the building. The pavilion was beautiful and unique, it is small but extraordinary, decorated with four balconies with cast-iron grilles with left and right swastikas, and the frieze of the building was decorated with medals with images of great people of the past. Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, Vespasian and his son Titus looked at each other. Interestingly, the building had no corners in principle, the concept around the corner did not concern it at all, this structure, because the corners of the building were rounded. But Nikita examined the doors especially carefully, with an unquenchable desire to get there, into the basements of this mysterious Hermitage. — Yes, you are a passionate person, — Katya slapped him on the shoulder, — I respect. And why be sluggish? No benefit to yourself, no income, and sad all the time. Let's go inside, I've never been here, "the girl said, and turned on a hidden camera on the knapsack buckle," otherwise shooting is prohibited, "she made a make-up and pointed to the sign at the entrance to the pavilion.

Nikita walked the last steps to the oak doors, and recalled when he thought about lenos, sarcophagi in the form of baths, as attributes of the Dionysian sacraments, and not about the objects of the funeral cult, and later, rumors about the coffins of vampires full of blood.

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Two years ago, Nikita Golubev was going to finally go to his beloved Pushkin Museum, Pushkinsky, where he had not been for three years. Three whole years! I managed to miss the copy of David in the atrium of the museum, sleeping Ariadna, copies of ancient Greek statues, the very atmosphere of charm and mystery, the beauty and proportionality of expositions, corridors, the walls of the building themselves. Legs themselves quickly carried it from "Borovitskaya" past the house of Pashkov, standing on a hill, and towering above the surroundings, past the monument to Vladimir the Holy. He crossed the road, looked at the beautiful building of the Shilov Gallery, and walked a little, found himself in front of the bronze fence of the museum, and entered the gate, the beautiful ate and green in a cozy garden, but the wonderful roses had not yet blossomed. The facade of the museum with a copy of the Parthenon pediment beckoned him inside, like the nymph Calypso, who lured Odysseus. The staircase of the museum, beautiful, like the staircase leading to the Acropolis, the Propylaeum of antiquity. He cast admiring glances left and right, feeling the beauty of touching the beautiful. Before him and the treasury of art there were only oak doors upholstered in bronze.. He opened the oak doors of the museum with bronze handles, with decorative copper plates decorated with the stars of the Argeads, so it seemed that Alexander the Great himself left his mark here. The architect obviously had a concept of Gnostic philosophy, if he had a concept of the meaning of that attribute. I bought a ticket and went to inspect the halls of the museum. A number of statues of ancient Greek gods carried him, and Ariadna lay in her place, not awakening from eternal sleep. Schliemann's treasures were extraordinary, Nikita took several pictures of tiaras and jade axes, and went to the right, where there was a hall with ancient Greek finds, many beautiful vessels, terracotta statues, and small bronze artifacts, and the crown of the collection, which stood in the center of the hall, was Uvarov's sarcophagus, exported from Italy in the 19th century. The young man walked around the artifact, examining the pre-ascendant marble carvings depicting the triumph of Dionysus. Nikita understood, or rather it just dawned on him, he even suffocated. This is not a sarcophagus! Hellenic sarcophagi were made in the form of reduced copies of Hellenic temples, were rectangular, with a lid in the form of a gable roof of these structures crowned with a palmetta.

The Roman sarcophagus was also rectangular, approaching the wall of the crypt, and one of the sides was always without relief, but with a flat lid. In addition, there was not even an inscription with

the name of the deceased, but on all Lenos, without exception, only Dionysus, his companions, his triumphs and victories were depicted, and never Proserpine, Persephone, Hades, Tanat or Cerberus, nothing that would depict the underground kingdom. And Dionysus, as you know, lived as a person, died as a person, and was reborn as a god. That is, all, without exception, Lenos are associated with the cult of Dionysus, as with the cult of revival. And the young culturologist involuntarily began to consider the inside of the Lenos, but it was closed with a plug to the very edge of the side of the artifact. But the interior of the marble artifact was not polished, that is, it was not a bath for ablutions, but was precisely a tool for tough initiations. Then he became uninteresting, and he left the museum in thoughtfulness.

*****

Igor burst into the exposition first, and began to simply devour with his eyes the painted Italian dishes of the 16th century, brought, obviously, by Peter Borisovich Sheremetev from Rome or Florence. Next, he studied Empire porcelain, looked longingly at the dull art albums on the tables, and looked at the replacement exposition, figures from 19th century porcelain. Katya went to the twisted narrow staircase, but before that she looked at all the doors inside, and began to gracefully climb upstairs, casting a glance at the frescoes on the ceiling. The Italian style of artists-formers ordered by the owners of the estate was amazing, and the execution of the plan was wonderful and proportionate. Finally, all three rose, Nikita was intrigued by the meander pattern on the parquet floor, and then he simply ran into the round hall, where beautiful busts of 18th-century Italian work stood in niches.

— Kat, look, — and he attracted a girl, — this is obviously Venus, — and he pointed to a woman's bust with a dress falling on one shoulder.

— Exactly, nudity is obvious, — the cynical Katerina added, — but beautiful, — and nearby?

— This is obviously a bust of Dionysus, here, you see, his attributes are ivy and lion's skin thrown over his shoulders.

— This is Artemis or Diana, — Igor added, pointing to the image of a girl with a bow and arrows behind her shoulders.

— Well, who is this, — Igor asked, pointing to the bust of a bearded, suffering person, — you are our specialist in paraphernalia.

— So, — Nikita began, sitting down on the floor next to the bust, — here, the skin on his head and shoulders. All busts obviously symbolize the seasons, their cycle. Then — and he thought, calculating ideas in his head — Ah, for sure. This is Hercules, Hercules at death, suffering before death and on the eve of his triumph and before the resurrection. Moreover, the same meaning is invested in the statues of the park by the architect. Yes, Hercules is suffering — and bowed a little to the audience, pressing his right palm to his heart.

Katerina shook her head a little while observing the exposition, then raised her head to the ceiling frescoes, where clouds floated in the blue sky, yes, the Italian style is more than obvious.

— The type of face is curious, — the girl noticed, — now such are not in trend, — haven't you noticed? busts convey to us the same type of face beloved by this sculptor.

— Excellent, — Nikita agreed absent-mindedly, reviewing the interior decoration, and Igor studied the dishes of the 19th century, located in the windows. These were excellent sets, German and Petersburg work. The three of us sat on a round sofa in the middle of the hall to relax and take a closer look at the exhibits, even the parquet with the image of a meander was noteworthy here. Finally, they rested and walked down the narrow oak staircase, and left the Pavilion. It was warm, but the sky began to close the clouds, and it was necessary to gather home. Igor took a 655 bus and went to his Mikhailov Street, and a couple of young people again went to the Italian Ponds and sat down on a bench.

— Well, Nikita, — the girl began, — when will we climb into the park with you at night? I saw how you licked your lips, looking at the doors to the basement of the Hermitage.

— I have no equipment to turn off the alarm, — the young man began tediously, — it is indecent to raid such a beautiful monument without keys and an alarm system.

"Are you afraid?" We are not going to rob, you will take two photos in the basement, and that's it. All in the name of science, otherwise you look, — and she pushed her elbow into the side of the gentleman, — and you will find real vampires here, imagine, an article in the newspaper — "Vampires of Kuskovo Park" — and at these words she made round-round eyes — and besides, — she seriously girl, — We are not going to rob, and not steal. They are kidnappers and deceivers, since they hide these exhibits from people. This is not their property, but the national property.

— VAMPIRES? — Nikita jumped up from the bench, and walked around the girl in excitement, — Well, yes, coffins.. marble, inside in something dark… Although… There are no lids on them, maybe they are bathrooms or lenos?

"You'll see what's there.

— No equipment, turn off the alarm. And you will have to climb through the fence, and even run away from the guards.

— Yes… Kapets, — and Katya looked at him expressively, — we will get across the pond with a boat. A rubber boat with squibs, so that it would break up and inflate. And I have a system to turn off the alarm, and so do the master keys.

— Cool, — the culturologist admired, — you also need to take a lantern, a camera, latex gloves and medical masks, a can of pepper gas from dogs.

— Everything seems to be, yes, — the girl sitting next to me bent her fingers on her hands, — in two days I will prepare everything, and you will be ready!

— Always ready! — Nikita reported, and raised his palm to his forehead in a pioneer salute.

Night walk

At home, a group of two conspirators busily stuffed two backpacks with important things — a sapper blade, an inflatable boat, folding oars, master keys, a camera, two cans of pepper gas, gloves, medical masks, sapper scissors. Katerina, being an independent lady, checked everything again. She looked at Nikita, he busily and controversially checked his equipment and laced his shoes.

— Well, everything seems to be. Let's sit down on the path, — said the girl, sitting on a stool in the hallway of the apartment, they were silent for a minute, checked if the light was off, and went. And soon the elevator from the fifth floor of the house was already carrying them towards the adventure. They jumped out of the entrance, and to their joy the grandmothers, usually sitting on the bench, could not be seen, they turned Malakhov on TV, so the path to a terrible adventure was free. They walked quickly through the streets, and entered the park, intending to go to the pond, so that the trees of the island would block the view of the guards and help the secrecy of the operation. They quickly walked along the paths of the park, it was dark, and there were no walking people, the young man and girl walked under the closed crowns of a wonderful linden alley, and the very aroma of air, saturated with a viscous and unique smell, was beautiful. Nikita took out his binoculars, twelve-time Nikon, and began to inspect the landing coast for hidden ambushes and possible counteraction to the guards. But "People in Black" was not visible, and Katya took out a folded boat and activated the squib. Their craft was ready very quickly, and Nikita took out and laid out folding oars.

— Everyone, Kat, let's go, he said, and they climbed into the boat, slightly soaking their feet as they landed.

Nikita began to row quickly, directing the boat to the island, and Katka watched the landing site with binoculars. Fortunately for them, everything was calm. They circled the island on the left, made landfall next to a thicket, and both were glad the night was moonless. In two runs, they ended up at the bushes behind the fence of the Grand Palace, the next jerk led them to the pond near the Dutch House. They caught their breath, their hearts beat often, not every day there were such adventures. Nikita took a katina jacket by the sleeve, and put his finger to his lips, reminding of

the silence, and they ran to the hedge around the Hermitage pavilion. Busts of Titus and Vespasian reproachfully looked at two insidious intruders, but they, of course, could not raise the alarm. There were no lights and light in the windows of the building, and they crept closer to the basement door, on which Katerina pointed the beam of her lantern, and immediately turned it off, lit a small light bulb on her head, and took out a bunch of faithful master keys from her loincloth pocket. I also prepared a computer system that allowed me to bypass the alarm. Nikita poured grease on the hinges of an old door, the girl conjured a little over her, and she did not creak, opening in front of them, and the researchers went inside the much-desired basement.

"Careful," Katya whispered, making scary eyes, and the snakes on her hand tattoos seemed to just hiss those words.

They put their boots with the entire sole on the floor stone when they went inside, so as not to make noise. Nikita touched the lamp on his head, and with his electric rays he began to disperse the darkness of the basement, but in the corners of the room, it seemed, lurked all the most extraordinary and interesting. Basically, the room was littered with all sorts of cardboard boxes, however, everything was in perfect order. They passed by two tables and old-old chairs, probably remembering Pyotr Borisovich Sheremetev. In the corner there was a huge oak closet, taller than Nikita himself, and next to it was a door to a secret room, which the young man noticed in the drawing. Katya ran Nikita's cheek with her fingers in latex, and smiled at him in the semi-darkness.

"Well, Indiana?" she chuckled, "got a taste of mystery?"

— Why Indiana? — he did not understand, distracted by reflection.

— You're not a brake, you're a slow throttle, Indiana Jones — and she turned away from him, doing the lock, trying not to break him.

— Opened it, he said after a barely audible snap of the lock tongue.

— Well done Lara, 'he kissed her on the cheek, smiling.

— What Lara? — the girl turned to him, saying this and making her eyebrows a house in surprise.

— Lara Croft, Nikita added with a laugh.

— One — one, — the girl added, — let's go, faster, get the photo, and the spatula is small and a bag for samples from the coffin. I have garlic — and she perched a ligament around her neck, and took a small dessert knife in her hand, obviously silver. Nikita squeezed his mouth so as not to laugh, and not to drop the right LX-7.

Nikita prepared everything, and they carefully stepped over, hardly breathing, went into a dusty room, where in the middle stood a marble bath, dimly shiny in the dark, covered from the sides with a grass pattern, or rather a pattern in the form of intertwined ivy. Two young researchers approached the goal of their search. Katya, all trembling with impatience, began to rummage with her left hand in the depths of an old Lenos, but despite her hopes, nothing was found there. The skeleton, or sleeping vampire, as they secretly hoped and waited, was not in the sarcophagus. Lenos was empty. The young man took a spatula in one hand, in the other there was a small bag, and he began to scrape the dark plaque from the marble walls, trying not to damage the most valuable artifact, and the flashlight on his forehead helped a lot, dispersing the darkness around. The lid lay on its side, against the wall of the room, Katerina carefully studied it, and clicked endlessly, clogging the camera card with pictures of the room. Finally, both finished work, the young man was covered in dust and cobwebs, Katya removed the camera, and Nikita spatula and samples, and examined the room, hoping to find something unexpected and important.

— Is the door closed?

— At the entrance? Yes, of course. Come on, it's done, we leave, — Katerina said, leaving the secret room, and began to close the castle. Finally, despite the tired hands, and the nervous shock, all the locks were closed, and the group gathered for the exit. Nikita stuck his head out of the basement, listening to the slightest rustles in the night. But nothing but insect chatter was heard. They rose to

degrees, and hid behind the tonsured bushes, when suddenly there was a wild cry, from which both skin froze. They sat a little, Nikita leaned out of the shelter, looking around, but there were no steps.

"Kat," they yell at the peacocks in the bird's yard, "the young man whispered.

— Exactly, — the girl sighed with relief, — let's go, we need to move.

They left even faster, and glided between trees and mowed bushes with black shadows, and now, out of breath with excitement, they ran to the hidden boat.

— Excellent, — Nikita said, and helped Katya to get into the boat, and took up the oars. Inflatable dishes slowly moved to the opposite shore, and the newly-minted rower worked with oars quickly, while lifting a bunch of splashes.

"Quiet, my hero," Katya chuckled as she held on to the side of the rescue vehicle. And so, the boat buried itself in the bushes, and lovers of night walks left their ship, and began to deprive it of air in order to shove it back into a duffel bag. They removed the masks from their heads, and gloves from their hands, and threw this good into the trash. Both breathed intermittently, and Nikita's legs began to tremble, but he did not even show Katya, who also only smiled nervously. The girl checked the earrings and her tackles for research, master keys and other necessary and important things. Suddenly she jerked, and grabbed the calf muscle and hissed in pain. Nikita bent down, and began to rub her leg until the girl sighed with relief.

— Thank you, otherwise you see, your leg is down. Let's go get a taxi.

— Moving, — added Nikita,

And they moved in the direction of the Italian ponds, crossing the road from the estate. Soon, a passing taxi grabbed the tired travelers towards their home. We went out at the entrance, and Katya could not help but ask, she was simply bursting with this mystery and unknown:

— Well, honestly, what do you think — was Sheremetev a vampire or not? — stammering with excitement, the girl asked, and took Nikita's hand.

— Now I don't know, — the young culturologist answered honestly, — well, vampires, like unscientific…

From Russia to Italy

Pyotr Borisovich, having received a vacation for a year, shook in the carriage, reading his beloved "Gargantua and Pantagrul," the four excellent horses carried the count to the intended goal, beloved Italy, however, known to him only from engravings. He planned to visit Venice, Milan, Florence, Ravenna and Rome, while fulfilling the instructions of the empress. He was not particularly afraid of the robbers, because his servant, Eulampius, was with a musketon and two pistols, and Elpidifor with a double-barreled gun, and Trofim, a coachman, also had a double-barreled gun loaded with buckshot and two pistols of Tula work, and the count himself owned a sword well, and he had a pistol with a wheel lock at the ready, and the rarest short gun with a revolver wick lock. This miracle was almost a hundred years old, but the thing was well looked after and lubricated, so the shotgun shot was great, six shots are not a joke to you. And the wick fuse is better than flint, Pyotr Borisovich has already come across this, if there is a lamp nearby, then this flint pampering is not needed.

It was 1763, and the noble traveler, with borrowed letters from banking houses and a small amount of cash, felt quite confident. He spent the night in good hotels or inns, the coachman constantly watched the horses and the crew. A couple of times I had to change the wheels on the way, but God is merciful, nothing terrible happened. So we arrived at the border of the Venetian state, and the guards approached "Hello, Senor," the guard said with a halberd and a pistol under his belt as he approached the carriage window.

The count submitted to him travel certificates, his passport, and letters of recommendation certified by the ambassador of the Republic of Venice. The guard examined the documents, looked at the second guard and the officer nodded his head,

— The documents are fine.

— Drive, — said the eldest of them, in a caftan embroidered with galloons, and the wagon moved on, to the famous city, apparently by the count only in the engravings of his father. In the inn near the city, Pyotr Borisovich stopped, and Yevlampiy dragged the chest with the count's goodness into the building, and sat down while the owner negotiated with the owner of the establishment about the price. The noble guest occupied two rooms, one for himself, and the second room next to the servants. Elpidifor went to check the kitchen, meet cooks and cooks. During the wanderings, he and Eulampius learned German and have already mastered Italian. They worked part-time as a healer — Eulampius was an excellent herbalist, and he had a light hand, so he pulled out his teeth from the suffering perfectly, the count, seeing this, bought him German medical instruments from Frankfurt masters, from good bronze. Eulampius, now looked like a real doctor, especially when he dressed up in all black. He wanted to have glasses for solidity, but the master considered that it would be too much for him. Elpidifor was a talented konoval, and, oddly enough, a born culinary specialist, he prepared Russian dishes for the master, and German and Hungarian ones. So he went to the kitchen to advance his talents and see live what Venetian cooking is famous for. Pietro Mocelli, a overweight man, about forty years old, served as a cook here, his hair was already gray, and dressed simply, for work in a gray caftan and pants, and boots with buckles, and clothes were covered with a gray linen apron. The Italian met the Russian cook cordially, but forced him to put on a cook's apron and wash his hands again. Elpidifor examined with interest the decoration of the kitchen — a huge wood-burning stove, with several camphorses hanging around copper pans, and the cook's assistants, gutting already plucked chickens in the yard, and another one cooking battered fish. The cook dexterously processed elongated green vegetables unknown in Russia, cutting off the peel from them, and taking out large seeds from the pulp, and then took up round and red fruits, cutting them along and across, and mixing them with crushed garlic.

"Let me try, Pietro," the master's servant asked, pointing to an unknown vegetable.

— Of course, a colleague. Then try this, — he also showed on a chopped red vegetable, — this is a tomato, or tomato. And green is zucchini, all fruits from America.

"And they don't cook from cabbage here," Elpidifor said, having chewed up a ready-made piece of zucchini, and then he began to take a tomato. I thought, I must say to the master, what would be at home in the greenhouse

such to raise — we eat cabbage soup, sauerkraut, and pies with cabbage.

Pietro looked curiously at the Russian and shook his head. What just does not happen in the world!

— Previously, before Pyotr Alekseevich, everything was only stewed and stewed on the table, and now both salads and roasts, Pyotr Borisovich even eats onion soup.

— Well, we will offer the count a battered fish, onion soup, stewed chicken in red wine, rice with American sweet pepper, tomatoes with garlic, cured ham for a snack, cured sausage, if you wish, black pudding, spaghetti with tartuffo, beautiful Italian wine.

Elpidifor listened attentively, nodded meaningfully, sometimes rolled his eyes, imagining all the unusualness of snacks, wrote everything in a notebook with a lead pencil, and went to report to the count. Back soon.

— His ladyship thanks for the attention, and asks to know if there is Villa D Este nearby, which he dreams of visiting, there are legends about her garden even in Russia.

— Of course, but the count could buy albums with plans for Italy's famous villas, including the Borghese pitchfork in Rome, in a bookstore nearby.

— Thank you, Pietro for your kindness and attention. After what time will everything be ready, lunch?

— In an hour, dear, you can report to His Grace, and everything will be ready, do not let me worry.

"Great," said the footman, and walked out of the kitchen and into the Count's quarters.

"In an hour, Your Ladyship, you'll be all set. And Pietro, the chef, says that there is a bookstore nearby where there are plans for Italy's famous gardens.

— Run there, friend, and here is the money, — the count put the wallet with silver scuds on the table, and moved them to Elpidifor, — go, buy what you need.

Elpidifor took the money, just in case, checked a folding knife bought in Hungary, you never know? And the footman went quickly to the designated shop, located on a street corner. He opened the door, the bell rang, and an Italian appeared, apparently the owner of the shop. There were many books on the shelves, there were small editions and huge incunabula.

— Bon giorno, — said the footman in Italian, — are there any atlases in your respected shop with drawings of gardens and architecture of the best villas in Italy?

The owner looked thoughtfully at the servant, and got up from his wooden chair and thoughtfully went to the rack where the volumes in quatro, large books a quarter of a printed sheet, stood. And finally, he brought two atlases to the buyer's table.

— Here, I would like to offer these editions, — said the bookworm, scrolling in front of the buyer, thoughtfully calling the ringing scudi in a beautiful suede wallet.

Elpidifor looked at both volumes, leafed through the diagrams of the gardens, drawings of buildings, descriptions and locations of the villa exhibits. He liked it, and Peter Borisovich would be delighted. They traded for some half an hour, the footman went out and returned to the shop only three times, so the purchase did not take so long. Having paid with the most thoughtful expression on his face, Elpidifor hurried to the inn, thinking how to be in time for dinner, kept books under his arm, and both were wrapped in wrapping paper. Footman heels banged on the pavement, and with each step the servant approached the coveted dinner, fine Italian cuisine. Lunch was excellent, and Pyotr Borisovich ordered to feed his servants well, and he considered the coveted atlas, turning over engravings with garden plans, whimsical labyrinths of alleys of trees and trimmed bushes, studied the sculptures decorating them.

— Listen, Elpidifor, we ate such tomatoes, — and the count looked meaningfully at the footman, — you would get the seeds of this vegetable. If you dry it and send it to Russia, we will plant it in our greenhouse, it will grow like in warm countries.

— Okay, your lordship, now I'm running to the kitchen.

— Here, give the cooks, — and the count gave heels of coins for the kitchen service, — and moved the money, and Elpidifor hid them in his vast pockets, and left the count's chambers.

Peter Borisovich planned to visit the famous villa near Rome. And be sure to visit Ravenna with the mausoleum of Galla Placidia and the church of San Vitale. The day after tomorrow the beautiful Venice awaited him.

Venice

But first, the count came to visit the villa in Stra, the famous villa of Pisani. At the gate they were met by a footman, the count agreed to visit such a famous place in advance, having written off with the owner from Russia.

— Hello, Count, — and the footman opened the gates leading inside the villa, and Sheremetev's carriage drove inside, and another servant showed Trofim the way to the Horse Yard — my name is Michele, I will gladly show you the beautiful garden of the estate.

Michele led Sheremetev, who picked up a notebook and a lead pencil, and sketched the buildings of the villa. The count cast admiring glances around, trying not to forget anything. There was something to love here — a magnificent sculpture, commensurate with the buildings of the villa. Finally, they came to the Labyrinth of Stra. Green alleys of intricate passages led to the center of the structure, where a white turret rose with a statue of Minerva, the goddess of wisdom crowning her. Michele unlocked the wicket.

— Count, please, go only with me, do not leave, I remember by heart the order of movement in the Labyrinth.

"Of course," Sheremetev agreed.

They walked along the paths limited by the hedge, and the footman led to the gate leading to the abode of Minerva, towering above the travelers. Sheremetev immediately captured the image of the deity and the monument with quick strokes of a pencil, they passed the Labyrinth, and climbed the twisted staircase of the tower, climbing to the very top, to the site of Minerva, the count enjoyed the beautiful garden spread out in front of his gaze. And they went back, at the exit Pyotr Borisovich thanked the Italian with a couple of scudy.

The count was transported by hired boat to beautiful Venice with Elpidiphorus and Eulampius, and Trofim remained in the inn to guard the crew. For everything was paid to the owner of the inn, cash receipts were received. The boat glided along the bay, and the city appeared, soon the travelers moved to the gondola, and two colorful rowers, in red caps, sleeveless and wide pants, raking with two oars, helped the travelers get to the town hall, where Pyotr Borisovich Sheremetev went alone. He noted his expensive letter from the clerk, an elderly Italian in his fifties, then found the secretary of the generals, where he gave letters from the Russian Chancellor for the Doge of Venice Pietro Grimani, and having finished all the business and received receipts, he began to inspect the Staircase of the Giants, the statues of Apollo and Neptune, trying to remember the smallest details of extraordinary sculptures and reliefs. On the other side, the count climbed the Golden Staircase, a covered gallery, the ceiling of the structure is beautifully painted, and the reliefs are gilded. There was also a young artist from whom the count bought engravings with images of the Doge's Palace, the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, the stairs of the Titans, and other beautiful structures. The servants, Eulampius and Elpidiphorus, were already walking with him. Ahead of them was a group of Frenchmen, judging by their speech, obviously husband and wife, and three children, accompanied by a governess. The children went wild, only the girl, who was walking decorously next to the maid, looked at the brothers condemningly. At first, the boys ran around the family for a race, but suddenly one of the mischievous people, tripping over a stone, broke his knee into blood and cried bitterly.

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