FRIENDSHIP, FELLOWSHIP AND FUN

Russia
Catherine the Great
and Vladimir Putin

A portrait of Catherine the Great by Danish painter Vigilius Eriksen circa 1765.

It seems Vladimir Putin's aspirations for an empire resemble those of long-ruling Russian Empress Catherine II - Catherine the Great (1762-1796).

Like Putin, Catherine was an accidental ruler. A foreigner with only distant Russian roots she rose to the throne in a military coup and assumed power in a country that had not been ruled by foreigners since the Varanians in the 9th century

Putin's ascent, while nowhere near as dramatic, was equally sudden. When he was appointed Prime minister by President Boris Yeltsin in August 1999 he was an unknown to Kremlin watchers to say nothing of the general public in Russia or abroad.

Yet by January 2000 he was acting president – and in March won a presidential election in the first round, garnering 53% of the vote.

Just like Putin – whose rule followed a move toward the West after the collapse of communism and the fall of the Soviet Union – Catherine came to power in the wake of great Westernising and modernizing reforms effected by Peter the Great.

Crimea

In his speech legitimizing Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, Vladimir Putin invoked 18th-century history.

It was, after all, Catherine II who had first acquired the peninsula for Russia at the same time she seized what is now Belarusian territory in the first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

(On August 5, 1772, Austria, Prussia and Russia signed the First Partition of Poland, which deprived the once mighty Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of approximately half of its population and almost one-third of its land area.)

In the second partition 21 years later, Catherine acquired extensive lands lying today in both Belarus and Ukraine. She amassed even more two years later, in Poland-Lithuania's final partition.

The parallels between Catherine's and Putin's designs on these territories are remarkable.

Russia's meddling in foreign elections did not begin in 2016. Poland had an elective monarchy in the 18th century, and Russia regularly intervened to ensure that its preferred candidate won.

In 1764, Catherine dispatched an army to Warsaw to see that one of her lovers, Stanisław Poniatowski, was elected king, declaring that she was acting "to defend the republic's freedoms." She expected Poniatowski to keep Poland weak, but he surprised her by undertaking modernizing reforms.

Catherine responded by covertly organizing militias of Poland's Protestant and Orthodox minorities, and secretly financing a rival Catholic militia, which plunged the commonwealth into civil war.

Poland's only significant ally, the Ottoman Empire, protested, but Catherine replied that she knew nothing of purported Russian interference. Alarmed Poles formed a fourth, anti-Russian militia and
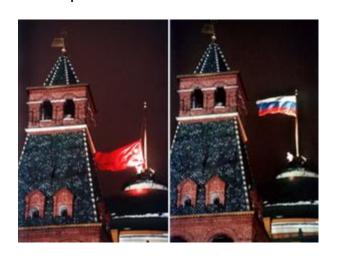
appealed to the Turks for aid, sparking a war in which Catherine wrested Crimea and most of what is now Ukraine's Black Sea coast from the Ottoman Empire.

A 1774 treaty guaranteed Crimea's independence, but nine years later Catherine unilaterally annexed it.

At its peak the Russian Empire covered an area of approximately 22,800,000 square kilometres and was the third-largest empire in history, surpassed only by the British Empire and the Mongol Empire. It ruled over a population of 125.6 million people. It was one of the world's most ethnically diverse countries with more than 100 distinct national ethnicities living within its borders.

Russian dissolution December 1991

Internal disintegration within the Soviet Union (USSR) resulted in the end of the existence of the country and of its federal government as a sovereign state, which in turn resulted in its 15 constituent republics gaining full independence.

On December 25, 1991 the Soviet hammer and sickle flag was lowered for the last time over the Kremlin, thereafter replace by the Russian tricolour. Michail Gorbachev resigned

his post as president of the Soviet Union, leaving Boris Yeltsin as president of the newly independent Russian state.

People all over the world watched in amazement at this relatively peaceful transition from former communist monolith into multiple separate nations.

Former Soviet Republics:

Armenia
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Estonia
Georgia
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Latvia
Lithuania
Moldova
Russia
Tajikistan
Turkmenistan
Ukraine
Uzbekistan

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July – and wildflowers are appearing in the bush

Men

I would like to send this message to the Probus Men to show appreciation for how valued they are.

Judee Radford

DISCOVER YOUR WORTH AGAIN

Old men were trained to be tough, which is just as well since they are now confronted with great challenge.

In youth they were indestructible, now their mortality beckons.

They were confident of the power in their body, now this power has declined.

They were proud of their achievements Now their identity as workers and providers is often gone.

They were independent and self sufficient. Now they can feel invisible.

They spent their lives in service for their family and community. They never asked for approval.

They absorbed their pain without "burdening" others with their own.

They rarely wept for their pain and grief, more rarely still in company.

They never showed their fear.

They simply put up, shut up, and got on with solving the problems, keeping their disappointments to themselves.

Their stoic version of honour has made them an island in the middle of an artic sea.

The next courageous step for older men is to soften and notice that their heart is more than mere muscle.

To every older man please notice you are loved, appreciated, and greatly worthy of respect.

The runs are on the board, regrets no longer relevant.

Allow yourself the soft sweet grace of accepting appreciation.

You have given everything of yourself as you made our world as it is now. You still have much to offer.

Life Advice by Martin Hunter Jones. Counsellor

If—

A Poem by Rudyard Kipling

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you
If all men count with you, but none too much
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

So concludes this poem, which was first published in Kipling's volume of short stories and poems, *Rewards and Fairies*, in 1910, it has become one of Kipling's best-known poems, and was even voted the UK's favourite poem of all time in a poll of 1995.

A certain masculine stoicism looms large in Kipling's poem – that is, the acknowledgement that, whilst you cannot always prevent bad things from happening to you, you can deal with them in a good way. 'If' you do so – then, Kipling says addressing his implied male reader, 'you'll be a man, my son!

Composure and Self-Restraint

The speaker of "If" champions a morality built on moderation. In this poem he advises his son to move through life with composure, integrity and humility. This means never letting "Triumph" nor "Disaster" events either good or bad go to one's head. Composure and self-restraint, the speaker implies, makes it possible to act with dignity in all circumstances and to lead a respectable and virtuous life.

All of these ideas about composure and restraint align with the stereotypically British "stiff upper lip" – in other words the idea that one should be resilient in the face of adversity. This was a particularly popular worldview in the late 1800's and early 1900's when a number of British poets embraced the Ancient Greek philosophy of stoicism, which urged indifference to both pain and pleasure.

Wimbledon

Several of the lines of '*If—*' are hanging in the player's entrance at Centre Court Wimbledon in England. The lines that are displayed read, "If you can meet with triumph and disaster and treat those two impostors just the same."

Kipling

While Kipling wrote poetry, novels, and articles, he is most notably known for his collection of short stories called *The Jungle Book*, written in 1894.

A British writer, Kipling won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907

Rudyard Kipling

Missionaries in the Sudan

Our guest speakers in July, Anne Jackson and Pauline Carr, spoke of Nursing in South Sudan and gave us a good insight into current living conditions there which emphasized how we live in "the lucky country"

I don't think we appreciate the sacrifice these people make to go to help people in third world countries and this brought back memories of my mother's 3 sisters who were missionaries in the Sudan. Pearl and her husband were in the Sudan from 1941 to 1955 and twin sisters, May and Win, from 1945 to 1966.

May's diary shows some of their sacrifices and difficulties to become missionaries in the Sudan and I summarize some extracts.

The wonderful years at the Sydney Bible Training Institute were followed by two years at Sydney Teacher's College. Win and I needed to pray in some money for equipment plus 3 years supply of groceries to take with us to Sudan, Africa. She took a job as cook for Sydney City Mission and money gradually accumulated with help from unnamed donors.

All luggage had to be at Sydney wharf ready in case a ship came to take them and their luggage to Africa, via Aden. Ten months later a ship came, the S S Orbita which had become a troop carrier during W.W.2 and they sailed on 18th December 1945.

We arrived at the Central Methodist Mission Home who knew nothing about us and eventually were taken to Missionary Society where we were expected. Three weeks later we boarded a train for Khartoum—a long journey which involved sitting up all night in the hot, hot, hot train. A good deal of desert came in with the hot air causing mud tracks down our legs. The train drew into Wadi Haifa, the border of Egypt and Sudan and we were escorted to the River Steamer for two days floating down the Nile. Then another change to train at Wadi Medani for Khartoum.

We were taken to American Presbyterian School where we stayed for three months due to the rainy season in the Nuba Mountains. We were able to commence Arabic study. Finally we made it to Abri and after a few weeks were taken south to Moro and our mission station, where we had the joy of catching up with our sister Pearl and her husband Ern. They had travelled by donkey or push bike 30 miles from their mission station to be at Moro to welcome us.

What a lovely surprise!

Colin Fordred

Sudan 1945

Maths and Logic Riddles

1)   How many times does the long hand of the clock pass the short hand between midnight one day and midnight the following day? As both hands are together at the starting time of midnight this does not count as a pass.

2)   How can you make the following equation true by drawing only one straight line: 5+5+5=550 Can you figure it out?

3)   What number do you get when you multiply all of the numbers on a telephone's number pad?

4)   You go to the doctor because you are ill, and he prescribes you with three pills and tells you to take them every half hour. How long do the pills last you?

5)   Where can you add 2 to 11 and get 1?

6)   In a lake, there is a patch of lily pads. Every day, the patch doubles in size. If it takes 48 days for the patch to cover the entire lake, how long would it take for the patch to cover half the lake?

7)   An apple is 40 cents, a banana is 60 cents. and a grapefruit is 80 cents. How much is a pear?

8)   Anna wrote all the numbers from 300 to 400 on a piece of paper. How many times did she write the digit 3?

9)   How many bricks does it take to complete a building made of brick?

10)   How many days are there in 4 years?

11)   A bat and a ball cost $1.10. The bat costs one dollar more than the ball. How much does the ball cost?

12)   Harry is 54 years old, and his mother, Anna, is 80. How many years ago was Anna three times the age of her son Harry?

Answers on the last page

Parenting in the Wild

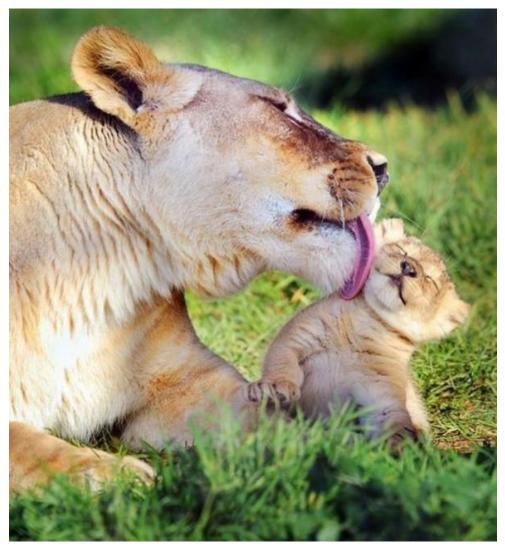© JOHN DANIELS/ARDEA/CATERS NEWS

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Maths and Logic Riddles – Answers

1) 21

2) There are two ways to do so:
Draw a line on the first plus sign to turn it into a 4.
Change the equal symbol to a crossed-out equal symbol which means "not equal to."

3) Zero, because any number multiplied by 0 will always equal 0.

4) An hour because the first pill doesn't take 30 minutes to take.

5) On a clock

6) The patch doubles in size every day and so on the 47th day the patch will be half the size it is on the 48th day.

7) Forty cents, because the price of each fruit is calculated by multiplying the number of vowels by 20 cents.

8) She wrote it 120 times.

9) Only one – the "last" one

10) The answer is 1461, because (365 x 4) + 1. One of the years is a leap year.

11) The ball costs 5 cents, not 10 cents. If one dollar more than 10 cents is $1.10, then $1.10 + 10 cents is $1.20. Therefore, the ball costs 5 cents.

12) 41 years ago

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Australia's Men – Poem by Dorothea Mackellar,

There are some that go for love of a fight
And some for love of a land,
And some for a dream of the world set free
Which they barely understand,

A dream of the world set free from Hate —
But splendidly, one and all,
Danger they drink as 'twere wine of Life
And jest as they reel and fall.

Clean aims, rare faculties, strength and youth,
They have poured them freely forth
For the sake of the sun-steeped land they left
And the far green isle in the North.

What can we do to be worthy of them,
Now hearts are breaking for pride?
Give comfort at least to the wounded men
And the kin of the men that died.

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