

Author's Note: Written for the [HODOWE: Benjamin Franklin's Birthday Challenge](#) on [LiveJournal's Section VII](#).



QUOTE 1: Hunger is the best pickle.

QUOTE 2: Eat to please thyself, but dress to please others.

both by *Benjamin Franklin*

THE INNER AND OUTER MAN

BY [LAH](#)

September 25, 1941
Kiev, Ukraine, U.S.S.R.

The little blond-haired boy pulled his worn jacket tighter about himself. He was cold as there was but sparse wood and no coal for the stove; yet more than anything else he was hungry. His last meal, almost twenty-hours before, hadn't consisted of much: some warmed-over watery borscht "enhanced" with a few miniscule scraps of cabbage. No potatoes, no carrots, and definitely no meat of any kind.

With the invasion of the Nazis, there were shortages of everything as the Germans encircled Kiev in a stranglehold. Thus the just-shy-of-eight-years Illya Kuryakin knew he had to be grateful for last night's dinner, poor as it was. He was currently waiting (with far too little patience, so his mother chivvied him) for the pot to reheat on the barely burning hob what little remained of the soup for tonight's "feast". It was all he would have, not even a chunk of stale black bread to dunk in the broth. Still, it was more than many Soviet citizens in the city would eat this long autumn night as the fighting between the Nazi and Red armies reached its zenith.

If ever the time came when he would be able to partake of regular meals again, the young boy vowed silently to himself, he would remember this time of want and therefore waste nothing and fully appreciate every morsel.

December 31, 1946
Athens, Greece

Annette Milbourne made a minute correction to the elegant black bowtie of her recently-turned fourteen-year-old grandson.

"There," she voiced her approval of the final result. "Now let me get a good look at you."

Obediently Napoleon Solo did a full turn before his grandmother, ending with an elegant bow over her hand as he lightly kissed her knuckles.

Annette beamed appreciatively. "You do have the charming manners down pat, no question of that. And now your first tuxedo to go along with them for the formal celebration this New Year's Eve here in the Embassy."

Napoleon playfully puffed out his chest. "Today I am a man!" he teased.

Annette shook her head even as she continued to smile. She did so love this boy. She and her husband had raised him from infancy and he was more their offspring than even their only daughter, Napoleon's mother. Ciaran had only ever managed to disappoint her parents, but her son – no, he never had and Annette was somehow sure he never would, despite his secretly concealed illegitimate birth. Franklin Milbourne was after all a diplomat of some renown and thus had the contacts to see to the posthumous creation of a legal certificate of marriage between Ciaran and her deceased lover Darius Solo.

"Old saws to the contrary, Napoleon, clothes don't make the man," his grandmother now advised the delightfully charismatic and admittedly handsome adolescent. "But they do display the man to the world. So you always want to make a good mark with them."

Napoleon nodded. "Yes, Mémé," he agreed unthinkingly.

Annette playfully tapped the cleft in his chin. "Now you are just placating your Grand-mère," she giped easily. "But I pray you do remember my words in future, Napoleon. How you present yourself to others is an essential facet of social grace."

Summer 1965
New York, New York, U.S.A.

Napoleon Solo and Illya Kuryakin sat at their usual table, the one with a full view of the door, at one of their favorite Italian restaurants. Solo fastidiously wiped his lips with the provided brightly colored cotton napkin, assuring no stray tomato sauce clung anywhere it shouldn't, and then leaned back in his chair with a contented sigh. Kuryakin was just as contentedly forking up a second helping of the proprietor's truly delectable homemade lasagna.

Eyeing the completely untouched portion of garlic bread on his dinner companion's side plate, Illya asked pointedly, "Are you going to eat your bread?"

With a permissive gesture, Napoleon waved his hand in his partner's direction. "Have at it, tovarisch. Myself I can't fit another bite."

"Waste not, want not," stated Illya simply as he drew the small plate to his side of the table.

For a few moments there was silence as Illya continued consuming his meal and Napoleon watched him somewhat bemusedly.

"Honestly, Illya, I don't know where you put it all," Napoleon finally commented with a little shake of his head.

Illya shrugged. "I have a fast metabolism. And I really see no merit in leaving already-served food uneaten, Napoleon, as I've told you before."

Now it was Napoleon who shrugged. "So you have."

"I need to bring back in my travel tote to the office tomorrow after getting all the kit in it laundered," Illya now continued onto another subject. "Can you give me a ride in? Taking the subway with a suitcase can be trying."

"Only if you're not averse to foregoing your usual morning stop at the Cub Room for coffee and a doughnut," agreed Napoleon with a particular caveat. "I have to get to Del Floria's early so to try on the new tuxedo he's fitted for me."

"Another tuxedo, Napoleon? Don't you have like a half-dozen already?"

"I only have two currently," corrected the dark-haired agent. "And I need this one for that soiree at the British Embassy we are attending as bodyguards for Mr. and Mrs. Waverly."

"Very forward of Thrush, I must say, concocting a kidnapping plot to take place at such a public event," noted Illya with a short shake of his head.

"Forward indeed," seconded the CEA. "Good thing our Section IV folks picked up the chatter concerning the scheme on one of the Thrush communication lines we regularly monitor. Here's the thing though, Illya: I definitely don't want my clothes to look well-used in such a prestigious setting. It could make me stand out as not being a dignitary but rather part of a security detail."

"I'm content with my current tux for the purpose," decided the other man.

Napoleon laughed lightly. “Of course you are. You prefer to indulge your senses and expend the resources of your wallet on freshly-prepared food rather than a newly-tailored suit.”

Illya grinned widely. “Guess we each have our individual priorities, my friend.”

“Linked somehow to our individual pasts I shouldn’t wonder,” agreed Solo with a wide grin of his own.

—THE END—

