

Dear Sasha and Jesse!

First and foremost, I want to congratulate you on this beautiful occasion and wish you all the happiness in the world in your future life. Though I cannot be here physically, I hope that the special connection I feel to both of you will help erase the distance between CT and California and, on this day, will bring us together.

It stands to reason that Sasha and I have always had this special bond and understanding – since those days of her very first winter in Leningrad when I would take her out for long walks, tucked away in a baby carrier backpack, and would bring her back sound asleep and completely covered with snow, face and all. Sasha never cried, and so I never got in trouble for it. The only break in communication we had was when, at the age of 4, she came back from Cuba speaking no Russian, only Spanish. But that lasted only a couple of weeks, and Sasha, as it will soon become a habit with her, picked up a foreign language with the speed and ease that I could only envy.

As far as I am concerned, Sasha couldn't have made a better choice than Jesse – I felt that we were kindred spirits the day we met!

First, Jesse and I have similar linguistic ability – in a foreign language, (unlike Sasha) we learn only the most important things. As you may well know, serving tea to guests is a very important Russian tradition, and whenever Jesse is visiting, I always offer him CHAI S LIMONOM, tea with lemon (my special recipe – very strong, very sweet, lots of lemon). But no matter how many times I offer, Jesse always responds CHAI BEZ LIMONA – tea without lemon. He does not know what he is missing, but I have to admire his persistence and accuracy in Russian usage, if not his taste in tea!

Jesse's taste in art, however, is impeccable - from day one he has always admired my paintings, even commissioned me one from a beautiful photo he took in (place?).

And, of course, another common bond I feel we have is our love for physics – though, admittedly, on very different levels: mine being 19th or, at best, 20th century physics while Jesse's is more like 22nd century!

So, Sasha and Jesse, to sum it up – I wish you lots of happiness, joy, fun, and success from now on!

V itoge pozhelayu vam (to sum it, I will wish you) bol'shogo schstya (happiness)
Veselya (fun), radosti (joy), vo vseh delah uspeha (success in all undertakings)
I polnogo otsutstviya nenasty (and a total absence of “bad weather”).

– *Boris Miroshnichenko*

Listen, you sure made us wait for this moment! I remember when you came down to Florida I didn't want to ask you guys when you would be getting married because Cosme told me that every time someone asked you, you would make us wait another year, and I think that was good because that way you had time to get to know each other better. I would have wanted to be with you in this moment but my health does not allow it. However, my best wishes will always be with you, before and after the wedding. I hope one day you will surprise me and Jesse will come and sing for me "A MI ME GUSTA MUCHO CAROLA," the way he did that time (to see if he learned the whole thing yet) and Sasha could enjoy the swimming pool without having us confuse her with cookies. On this day that you chose to promise each other such beautiful things I wish for you that you will be very happy and from my little corner in Florida I send you my blessings.

— *María Magdalena ("Monona") Almaral*