
BOOK
OF
DREAMS
for Russia
COC Netherlands & GayKrant

BOOK OF DREAMS

for Russia

COC Netherlands & GayKrant

DEAR PRESIDENT PUTIN,

WHEN KING WILLEM-ALEXANDER DER NEDERLANDEN ASCENDED THE THRONE, THE DUTCH PEOPLE OFFERED HIM A *BOOK OF DREAMS*. IN THIS BOOK THE PEOPLE SHARED THEIR FUTURE DREAMS FOR THE NETHERLANDS.

THIS *BOOK OF DREAMS FOR RUSSIA* HAS MANY SIMILARITIES WITH THE ORIGINAL ONE. BOTH BOOKS CONTAIN DUTCH DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE. BUT THERE'S ONE DIFFERENCE: THE *BOOK OF DREAMS FOR RUSSIA* IS NOT FOR OURSELVES, BUT FOR THE FRIENDS WE LOVE: THE PEOPLE OF RUSSIA.

AS FRIENDS AND ALLIES, WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE AND THEIR FUTURE. IN THE *BOOK OF DREAMS FOR RUSSIA* WE NOT ONLY EXPRESS OUR ANXIETIES, BUT ALSO OUR HOPE FOR RUSSIA. PLEASE ACCEPT THIS BOOK.

IN THE NAME OF THE PEOPLE OF THE NETHERLANDS,

TANJA INEKE (COC NETHERLANDS)
EDWIN REINERIE (GAYKRANT)

THOMAS DE BRES

actor

BOOK OF DREAMS
for Russia



GORDON

singer, songwriter, tv host, writer, human and gay

BOOK OF DREAMS
for Russia

MR. PUTIN,

WHO WANTS TO BE RUSSIAN NOWADAYS?
PEOPLE SO DIVIDED AND SCARED BY GAYS,
WHO WANTS TO BELONG TO A COUNTRY WHERE NO MAN IS THE SAME?

WHERE GAYS ARE BRUTALIZED AND CALLED A SHAME?
NO THANK YOU MR. PUTIN LET ME STAY IN PEACE AND REST.
IN A COUNTRY WHERE PEOPLE THINK I AM THE BEST.
WITHOUT JUDGING ME FOR WHO OR WHAT I AM.
WHERE I CAN KISS AND HUG MY MAN.

I WISH YOU LOVE AND FREEDOM IN YOUR MIND.
SO ONE DAY YOU CAN REFLECT THAT TO YOUR OWN KIND.

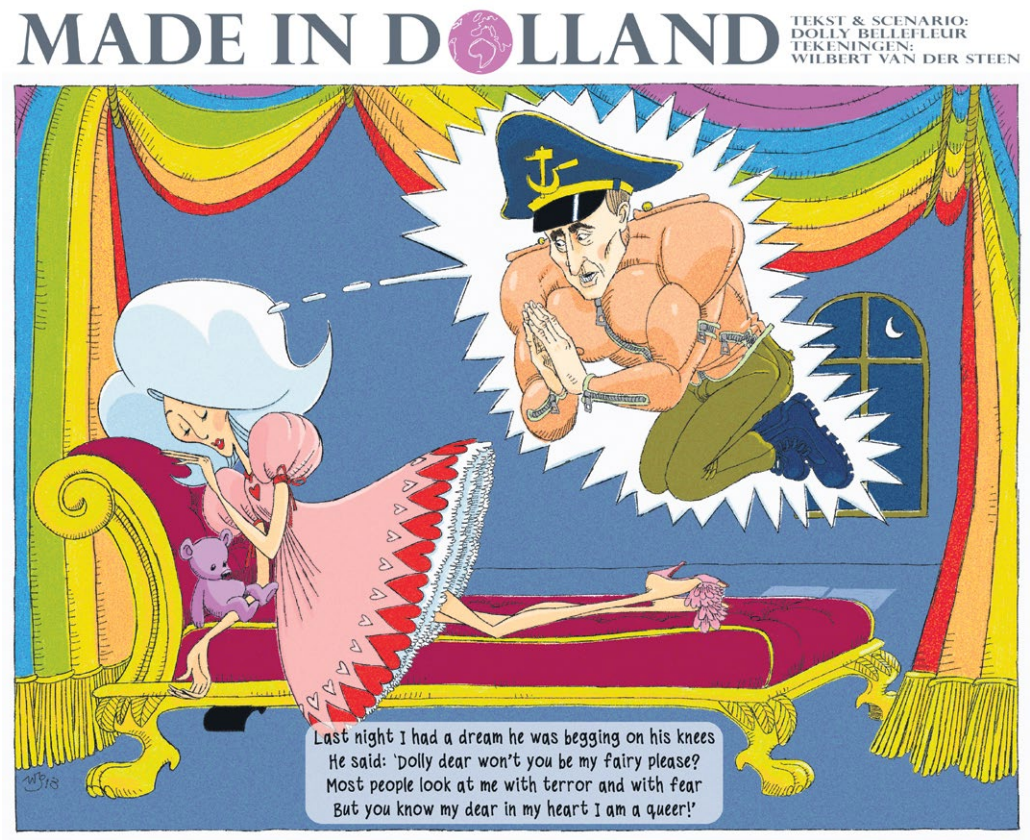
WITH REGARDS,

GORDON.

DOLLY BELLEFLEUR

artist & entertainer

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for Russia



MARGA BULT

singer

FRITS HUFFNAGEL

presentor

SANDRA SCHUURHOF

journalist

ADO DEN HAAG

football club

KLAAS DIJKHOF

member of parliament

PETER SCHOUTEN

journalist

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At the end of 17th century Czar Peter the Great looked out of his window. He dreamed of major modernizations and reforms. Where else but in the Dutch Republic could he find inspiration? He went on a journey. In 1697 the Czar visited our country. Here he learned the trade of carpenter. The city of Amsterdam inspired him to found his new capital, St. Petersburg. Window on the West was the nickname of this beautiful city. Czar's daugther Anna Pavlovna of Russia would follow him, more than a century later, and married the Dutch king Willem II in 1816.

Russia and Holland share so much history, but are currently so apart from each other. Our dream for Russia is that the window will be wide open again. To everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity or sexual preference. The window is slammed beaten in the faces of many.

Please re-open the window!

FRANK VAN DALEN

chair pride united (www.prideunited.org)

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Pride United

Open letter of friendship

Dear friends,

The friendship between Russia and the Netherlands is celebrated this year as “Netherlands-Russia-year 2013”. We have seen many cultural, economic and social festivities.

On August 25th the “Constellation of Russia” took take place in Amsterdam. It was a great show with performances of Russian dancers, artists and video-shows. This event was organized by Rossotrudnichestvo, a Russian federal government agency within the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The objective of this concert, as was made explicit in the press release of Rossotrudnichestvo, was to present the Dutch audience the Russian culture in “all its beauty and diversity”.



PHOTO'S JAN-WILLEM VAN DE WALL

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The organisers of the concert, the Russian government, has repeatedly proven that it does not consider the diversity in Russian culture as an integral part of it's beauty and diversity.

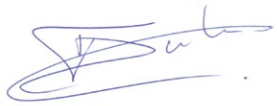
The Mayor as well as the Amsterdam City Council have repeatedly voiced their grave concern on the policy towards LGBT people of the Russian government. Amsterdam is a city that is committed to freedom of expression.

We decided to seize this opportunity and to send our friends in Russia a message of love. The audience of the concert of August 25th was resplendid of all the colours of the rainbow and we did sent out to the world a message of beauty and diversity.

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Our dream for Russia is that the rainbow colors will color the relations of friendship with Russia and the rest of the world as inextricably part of mutual friendship.

You are not alone. The Dutch LGBT's and their allies are with you in friendship and solidarity.



The manifestation on Augustus 25th was organised by Pride United and COC Netherlands with the support of Free Press Unlimited, Amnesty International, City of Amsterdam, Aids Foundation, Gala, Pann, Expreszo, Gay.nl, OUT TV, Mr. B, Club Churchnl, OUT TV, Mr. B, Club Church.



LYNN STARITSKY

citizen

BOOK OF DREAMS
for Russia

MR. PUTIN.

MY DREAM FOR RUSSIA IS:

LET THE PINK AND BLUE BLOOD RUSH THROUGH EVERYONE WHO FEELS THAT. LET THE RAINBOW-FLAG WAVE IN EVERY RUSSIAN STREET. LET US RECOGNIZE AND ACCEPT THE PINK AND BLUE LIGHTNING BOLT IN EACH-OTHERS EYES. PINK. BLUE AND RUSSIAN BLOOD PROUDLY BLEND TOGETHER.

LYNN STARITSKY

GERBEN KARSSENBERGEN

citizen

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TONEELGROEP AMSTERDAM

theater company

BOOK OF DREAMS
for Russia

"Many thanks, ladies and gentlemen, many thanks for your applause and for being here tonight.

We speak in the name of the whole team of Toneelgroep Amsterdam, in the name of our writers, our directors, our actors, our technicians, everybody.

This is a very special evening for us. To play Chekhov — 'our' Chekhov — in Russia, the country where he lived and worked, has been our big dream for a long time.

We not only admire Russia because of Anton Chekhov. We, artists from the Netherlands and Belgium, know this as no one else. We admire Russia because some of our biggest heroes from the world of literature, theatre, music, poetry, philosophy, dance and the arts were born and have worked here. From Russia they have inspired and influenced the world. From Tchaikovsky to Majkowski, from Diaghilev to Stanislawski: without them the world would be much poorer.

Precisely because of this inspiring heritage, we feel the urge to speak up. We regret the recent Russian laws that limit the rights of journalists and homosexuals. Not only these laws are painful for many, many people, but also their direct consequences, like the acts of violence and the intimidations.

Tonight we not only want to honor one of the biggest playwrights in history. We would like to add two things to this. We would like to support those who suffer because of these laws. And we would like to ask everyone, who accepts these laws, to reconsider their standpoint.

It's important for us to speak up. We have learned this of our Russian heroes. That's the reason we stand here. We hope you understand what we are saying.
This is an endorsement. And an invitation to you: could you please reconsider these grievous laws?"

Toneelgroep Amsterdam

(This speech was given at Baltic House in St. Petersburg on 7th October 2013)

RENÉ LUIJK

citizen

BOOK OF DREAMS
for Russia

Dear Mr. Putin,
My dream for Russia is that the Russian people will have many grandparents, like the one who wrote the letter below!

Warm regards,
René Luijk

Dear Christine,

I'm disappointed in you as a daughter. You're correct that we have a "shame in the family", but mistaken about what it is. Kicking Chad out of your home simply because he told you he was gay is the real "abomination" here. A parent disowning her child is what goes "against nature." The only intelligent thing I heard you saying in all this was that "you didn't raise your son to be gay." Of course you didn't. He was born this way and didn't choose it any more than he being left-handed. You however, have made a choice of being hurtful, narrow-minded and backward. So, while we are in the business of disowning our children, I think I'll take this moment to say goodbye to you. I now have a fabulous (as the gays put it) grandson to raise, and I don't have time for heart-less B-word of a daughter. If you find your heart, give us a call.

Dad.

WOUTER NEERINGS & LEONARD VONK NOORDEGRAAF

activists & artists



MAARTEN FABER

young artist

BOOK OF DREAMS
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GROWING UP IN A SMALL TOWN AS A GAY BOY WAS NOT EASY. I'VE BEEN BULLIED FOR MANY YEARS BECAUSE OF WHO I AM. PEOPLE CALLED ME NAMES SINCE I WAS FOUR YEARS OLD. THE KIDS IN THE STREET CALLED ME "GAY" AND I DIDN'T EVEN KNEW WHAT IT MEANT. I GREW UP WITH MY TOYS AND HAD NOT MANY FRIENDS. WHEN MY MOTHER TOLD ME TO PLAY OUTSIDE TO MAKE SOME FRIENDS I TOLD HER I WENT TO THE PLAYGROUND. WHAT I REALLY DID WAS SITTING ON A FENCE AND COUNT TO HUNDRED AND WENT BACK HOME. I TOLD MY MOM THAT THERE WAS NOBODY OUTSIDE.

I ACCEPTED MYSELF WHEN I WAS TWELVE YEARS OLD AND I CAME OUT OF THE CLOSET WHEN I WAS THIRTEEN. PEOPLE ARE IN SHOCK WHEN I TELL THEM THAT I WAS THAT SURE ABOUT MY SEXUALITY ON THIS VERY YOUNG AGE. I FELT FREE ENOUGH TO BE THIS OPEN ABOUT MYSELF BECAUSE OF THE PEOPLE AROUND ME. THE FUNNY PART IS THAT IT WAS NEVER A BAD THING TO ME. IT WAS JUST ANOTHER PART OF ME. I'M NOT WHO I AM BECAUSE OF MY SEXUALITY. I AM WHO I AM AND YES. I'M GAY TOO.

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I'M STILL WONDERING WHY PEOPLE LIKE YOU HATE GAY PEOPLE. I'M THE EXACT SAME PERSON AS YOU ARE. THERE'S ONLY ONE DIFFERENCE. I HAVE THE ABILITY TO LOVE AND TO SHARE THAT LOVE. I HAVE THE DESIRE TO TELL SOMEONE THAT HE'S BEAUTIFUL AND THAT I WILL CARE FOR HIM TILL THE END OF TIME. YOU AREN'T CAPABLE OF THAT AND THAT MAKES ME SAD.
NOW THAT I'M OLDER I MEET PEOPLE WHO LOVE ME AND ACCEPT ME FOR WHO I AM AND THAT LIFTS ME UP. I LIVE IN A COUNTRY WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE OPEN MINDED AND SEE THAT BEING GAY IS ABOUT NOTHING BUT LOVE. PLEASE DON'T DESTROY THIS MINDSET. PLEASE GIVE PEOPLE IN YOUR COUNTRY THE CHANCE TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS. TO SHARE LOVE AND TO ACCEPT LOVE.
I REALLY HOPE THAT YOU ARE JUST THAT BOY ON THE FENCE COUNTING TILL HUNDRED. THAT BOY WHO IS NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO SHARE LOVE. I REALLY HOPE THAT YOU WILL TELL THE WORLD THAT THE DECISIONS THAT YOU MADE WERE THE DECISIONS OF AN INSECURE BOY WHO WAS SCARED FOR THE BIG KIDS ON THE STREET. I REALLY HOPE YOU WILL BECOME THAT MAN WHO IS WISE ENOUGH TO SAY "I WAS WRONG AND I'M SORRY".

SOPHIE IN 'T VELD

member of the european parliament

leader of d66 delegation

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for Russia

I wish for the Russian people an open society where human rights are being respected and where LGBTI people can always be themselves in freedom.

The human rights situation in Russia has been alarming for many years: foreign NGO's are being labeled as 'foreign agents', in words that remind us of the Cold War, regional and federal homophobic legislation limit the freedom of expression of the LGBTI community severely as does the prohibition of manifestations during the Olympic Games in Sochi.

I have visited the Moscow Pride myself in 2006 and 2007 where I got grasped by the situation of LGBTI people in Russia; they are being regarded as public enemy number one. The combination of the homophobic legislation, the law on foreign agents and the mass surveillance of all communication during the Olympic Games adds up to a toxic combination with regard to human rights; not only the LGBTI community will be targeted, but certainly also organizations that offers support to LGBTI people.

The situation in Russia is addressed on numerous occasions by international organizations and by different political leaders, but Russia refuses to be bothered. On the contrary, Russia seems to take a firmer stance with every new call for the protection of human rights. President Putin speaks the language of power, not of dialogue. It is therefore that I do not only have a wish for the Russian people, but also for all international organizations and political leaders: please show Russia that respect for human rights goes beyond diplomatic language and that real actions are needed. Only then, all Russians can truly be themselves and live in a society where all human rights are being respected, also the rights of the LGBTI community.

IRENE HEMELAAR

citizen

BOOK OF DREAMS
for Russia

I read the news. A nasty incident has taken place in the Amsterdam Vondelpark. A man visiting a cruising area for gay men has been attacked by someone and stabbed frequently with a knife. Reactions on social media show that people are abhorred by such a brutal act. The police start an investigation and Amsterdam mayor Eberhard van der Laan appeals to our responsibility as "Amsterdammers" to go to the police if one has any information on the attack, in order to behold our open culture, a culture which doesn't exclude anybody for their religion, colour of their skin or sexual orientation. Our mayor explains that we have to join forces in making sure that everybody is able to walk the streets pleasantly and freely, for incidents such as this can't be happening in Amsterdam.

I feel embraced and encouraged by these words. In Amsterdam if you are harassed or harmed, the city stands with you. In the Netherlands punishments for hate crimes against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders are more severe than punishments for the same kind of harassment practiced for other reasons.

I go outside and greet my neighbours. Half a year ago, while sharing a cup of tea shortly after they moved in, they told me their roots lay in Pakistan, that they were married recently and that their parents sought them out for each other. Although arranged marriage as an institution fills me with horror, I can see why their parents thought they would make a great match. Because they are. At that same cup of tea I told them that for passion, politics and work I organize Gay Pride in Amsterdam. They fell silent for a bit at that particular moment, but during the Pride week, which coincided with Ramadan, when I got home late every day they shared their sunset dinners with me.

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And after the Pride week they complimented me with the success of the event, which attracted over 400.000 people visiting the parade through the canals, and the over 200 other parties, sports events, emancipatory and cultural events organized by our community.

I feel comforted by their friendliness. I'm happy that our different approach on how to live a good life doesn't mean that we can't be good neighbours or that we can't be respectful and kind to or even like each other.



PHOTO: ADAM BOUSKA

I go to bed and dream my dream for Russia. I dream for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders simply to be able to go outside and feel free to express themselves openly for who they are, not worrying what could happen to you if your neighbours were to know your true gender of sexual identity, without fear for any sort of legal punishment one could receive for a loving embrace, holding hands, let alone a spontaneous and affectionate kiss for the one you love.

TANJA INEKE

president coc netherlands

BOOK OF DREAMS
for Russia

Dear President Putin,
The youth has the future: let them bring color to the world. Share this page at all your schools!
Tanja Ineke
President COC, federation of Dutch associations for the integration of homosexuality



Цвет этой окраски в цвета радуги

Colour this page in the colours of the rainbow



KIRSTEN COUWENBERGH

citizen

BOOK OF DREAMS
for Russia

It was a sunny day and my partner and I had our free afternoon spent in the park. There were dark clouds and soon it began to rain. My partner took off his coat and put it around me. We walked through the park and passed a group of teenagers. One of them, a beautiful girl, looked up at the raindrops falling down on her bare arms. Another girl took an umbrella from her bag and held it above their heads. Laughing, the girls looked at each other and put their arms around each other's waists. My partner and I got soaking wet by the rain. I grabbed my partner's hand and together we began dancing in the puddles. The girls saw us doing this and they followed our example. Together we danced in the rain.

Suddenly I recognized the girls from a previous rainy afternoon in the park. That day the girls were also hiding under an umbrella. I remember a young man who had grabbed the umbrella out of the hands of one of the girls while shouting 'I'm the man here!' The girls were in tears and let the park in silence.

I suddenly saw that same guy, a bit further away taking shelter under a tree. He looked at us, while we were full of joy, and were laughing and dancing in the rain. His gaze went to the girl he had tried to protect and who was now hand-in-hand with the other girl. He looked at her smiling face and eventually he began smiling himself. Soon the sun came out.

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GIDEON QUERIDO VAN FRANK

senior editor gaykrant

When king Willem Alexander ascended the throne this year the Dutch people offered him and his lovely queen a Droomboek, a Dream Book. In this book the people shared their dreams and hopes for the future of The Netherlands and the Dutch people.

When some months later word came out our new king was going to visit Russia, I decided it was time for another Dream Book. Like the previous one, this new book should be filled with dreams, hopes and love. Like the previous one, it should be offered to our king and queen.
But unlike the previous one, this new Dream Book is not for our selves. It is for our friends, the people of Russia. This time we ask our king to give the book to the leader and most powerful man of Russia. This time are hearts and minds are not only filled with love, but also with fear. This time we are concerned about the future.



BOOK OF DREAMS
for Russia

As a gay man, a Jew, an independent free spirit and a journalist I am deeply concerned by the developments in Russia. I am alarmed and enraged by the effects these have on the Russian people. The human rights situation is more than alarming. Freedom of expression is limited. Sexual minorities are being scapegoated and encounter not only limitations of freedom, but also isolation, alienation, hate and physical violence. This must stop.

My dream for the Russia is: *holiness*. Let there be holiness in the hearts of the Russian people. Let the future of Russia be holy. This biblical commandment (Lev. Ch. 20 v.7) asks us to be holy, to be pure in our love for our self and for the other. It demands us to respect and celebrate every aspect of the divine creation: our self, each other, our spirits, our bodies, the world, the sun, the moon, the stars, the universe and God.

In the words of the great poet and pervert Allen Ginsberg:

Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy!
The world is holy! The soul is holy! The skin is holy! The nose is holy! The tounge and cock and hand and asshole holy!
Everything is holy! everybody's holy! everywhere is holy! everyday is in eternity! everyman's an angel!
The bum's as holy as the seraphim! the madman is holy as you my soul are holy!
Holy New York Holy San Francisco Holy Peoria & Seattle Holy Paris Holy Tangiers Holy Moscow!

EDWIN REINERIE

editor-in-chief gaykrant

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