

# Defenders: Russia – chapter 10

A live World Cup story by Tom Palmer

**Seth has realised that he might have found a way to take charge of his relationship with Alexei, to make the women in black go away, and to start, at last, to enjoy the World Cup. He has talked to his mum and to Nadiya about what he should do. And now the day has come for him to decide, or for you to decide, what happens next...**

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## Десять

Seth had been confused all day. There were so many thoughts, ideas, memories and feelings in his head that he had no idea which direction to go in to confront the grave situation he found himself in. All day at school he'd been trying to make sense of everything, not focusing on his lessons at all. He even forgot to have lunch he was so distracted.

When he got home he was sweltering and hungry. The weather had been so hot and he was desperately thirsty, as well as hungry. Once he had given Rosa a quick walk, he went to the kitchen to find food and drink. As he opened the fridge he noticed the World Cup wall chart that he had stuck to the fridge with magnets.

It was blank. He had not filled in one result.

Nearly two weeks into the tournament and nothing. Seth felt angry. He had so much going on in his head that he was neglecting the things that should matter to someone his age, like filling in a World Cup wallchart.

Without scores on it his wallchart was useless!

Seth tore the wallchart off his fridge. He slammed it onto the kitchen table.

Time to sort himself out. Time to find a use for his wallchart. Time to empty his head. Onto the back of his World Cup wallchart.

As he ate a sandwich and drank some water, Seth heard a knock at the door. Rosa barked. Then Seth heard Nadiya's voice.

'Where are you?'

'Kitchen,' Seth replied, his mouth stuffed with food. 'Sandwich?'

'No thanks,' Nadiya grimaced.

Seth sat down and pushed the wallchart towards his friend. 'You can help me. Can we talk about what I need to do? And will you write down the things we decide? Please.'

Nadiya grinned now. She loved making lists.

She started by drawing a line to divide the blank side of the posters into two columns. Seth asked her to write his **Reasons to stop helping Alexei** at the top of one, then his **Reasons to continue to help Alexei** at the top of the other.

This would help them decide whether he should return to Russia with the Fabergé egg to hide it into the Romanov crypt, or whether he should just take the egg and hand it over to the two women in black, who had been harrying him for days now.

Then they began, as the Argentina v Nigeria match began on the TV, the sound off.

### **Reasons to stop helping Alexei**

**ONE.** I think I am in shock after seeing the execution of the Romanov family. I don't feel well. What if I carried on helping Alexei and something else happened like that? Would it be too much for me?

**TWO.** I want to be a normal boy who can sit down and enjoy the World Cup without worrying about being transported to Russia through my TV. England play Belgium tomorrow. That's what I should be thinking about: not women in black, ghosts of Russian royalty and eggs worth tens of millions of pounds.

**THREE.** My mum said Alexei is a bully and you should stand up to bullies, whoever they are.

**FOUR.** I don't need to help Alexei. He is weaker now. He admitted it himself. I don't think he has the strength to cause England to lose or kidnap Rosa again.

## Reasons to continue to help Alexei

**ONE.** Alexei says that if I do not take the Fabergé egg to his parents' crypt in St Petersburg, then he will remain a lost soul for ever and never join his parents. It would be kind to help him – if I thought it was not too dangerous.

**TWO.** Now that I am no longer afraid of him, I sort of feel sorry for Alexei after seeing how he and his family were killed. If I could help him find peace, that would be a nice thing to do.

**THREE.** It doesn't feel right just handing the Fabergé egg to the women in black. They've been following me and – in a way – bullying me too. That makes me angry.

**FOUR.** It might be fun to carry on visiting Russia and taking on these challenges. It was actually quite thrilling being chased by zombies from a Roman amphitheatre and some of my other adventures. I do sometimes like my life as child ghostbuster.

Seth leaned back and stared at the muted TV in front of him. The last few minutes of the Argentina v Nigeria match. It was 1-1. Nigeria was going through if it stayed like this, meaning one of the best teams in the world was going home. And one of the best players.

Nadiya and Seth watched as play moved from end to end. Either team could score. And then – from nowhere – Marcus Rojo was on the end of a cross. He buried it.

2-1 to the South Americans.

Seth smiled as he watched Messi jump on Rojo's back, then the two of them being mobbed by the Argentina subs. It was mayhem as thousands of blue and white flag waving fans celebrated in the stands.

But not so good for Nigeria; Seth felt very sorry for them.

'That was awesome,' Nadiya said.

Seth nodded and laughed. He had enjoyed the game. And it occurred to him that it was the first match of the World Cup he had really been excited by. He knew exactly why.

He'd made his decision about Alexei.

He felt like he was back in control of his life.

'I've decided what to do,' Seth told his friend, looking at the list they had made. And, after he told her what he was going to do, he turned the wall chart back to its right side and together they filled in the scores he hadn't had a chance to fill in.

**Now it's time for you to vote. You have two choices for where the story will go next. Talk about what you think Seth should do next. Think about the reasons Seth and Nadiya came up with for and against helping Alexei. What would you do if you were Seth?**

#### **Option A**

**Seth stops helping Alexei and goes to hand the Fabergé egg over to the women in black. He has had enough and wants to enjoy the football.**

#### **Option B**

**Seth continues to help Alexei, so to try to fulfil Alexei's last wish to be with his parents' spirits. But Seth will do it only on his terms, with no more bullying.**

**Please cast your vote by using the contact form here: <http://tompalmer.co.uk/world-cup-2018-literacy-resources/> or by emailing [vote@tompalmer.co.uk](mailto:vote@tompalmer.co.uk) with your preferred option in the subject line. Voting will be open from 7am to 7pm British Summer Time on Wednesday 27 June only. Any votes submitted before or after the voting is open will not be counted.**

**Any additional email addresses submitted for voting purposes will not be used for future marketing purposes or shared with any third party, without consent. (With new GDPR rules coming in, we ask you to check our privacy policy: <http://tompalmer.co.uk/privacy-policy/> and terms and conditions: <http://tompalmer.co.uk/terms-and-conditions/>.)**

**Chapter 11 of *Defenders: Russia* will be published before 7.30am on Thursday 28 June at <https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/defenders-russia-world-cup-2018-football-story/>.**

**The results of your vote will determine what happens next!**

World Cup word of the day

# Transported

