



Four Sisters: The Lost Lives of the Romanov Grand Duchesses

By Helen Rappaport

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A 12-WEEK *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER

"Helen Rappaport paints a compelling portrait of the doomed grand duchesses."
?People magazine

"The public spoke of the sisters in a genteel, superficial manner, but Rappaport captures sections of letters and diary entries to showcase the sisters' thoughtfulness and intelligence." **?Publishers Weekly (starred review)**

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Last Days of the Romanovs* and *Caught in the Revolution*, *The Romanov Sisters* reveals the untold stories of the four daughters of Nicholas and Alexandra.

They were the Princess Dianas of their day?perhaps the most photographed and talked about young royals of the early twentieth century. The four captivating Russian Grand Duchesses?Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia Romanov?were much admired for their happy dispositions, their looks, the clothes they wore and their privileged lifestyle.

Over the years, the story of the four Romanov sisters and their tragic end in a basement at Ekaterinburg in 1918 has clouded our view of them, leading to a mass of sentimental and idealized hagiography. With this treasure trove of diaries and letters from the grand duchesses to their friends and family, we learn that they were intelligent, sensitive and perceptive witnesses to the dark turmoil within their immediate family and the ominous approach of the Russian Revolution, the nightmare that would sweep their world away, and them along with it.

The Romanov Sisters sets out to capture the joy as well as the insecurities and poignancy of those young lives against the backdrop of the dying days of late Imperial Russia, World War I and the Russian Revolution. Helen Rappaport aims to present a new and challenging take on the story, drawing extensively on previously unseen or unpublished letters, diaries and archival sources, as well as

private collections. It is a book that will surprise people, even aficionados.

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Editorial Review

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Rappaport, who has previously written about the last days of the Romanov family as well as the lives of other royal families, here turns her attention to Olga, Tatiana, Maria, and Anastasia, murdered along with their brother and parents in 1918. Yet, in some ways, this is less about the girls and more about their mother, Alexandra, whose despair at producing four girls before giving birth to a hemophiliac son, is palpable. Rappaport uses the sisters' letters and diaries to illuminate their lives, but they rarely jump off the pages as real people, even though they are each described with specific personality traits. Perhaps not surprisingly, it is when their relationships with the magnetic Rasputin are introduced that the girls seem the most alive. What also comes through quite clearly is the great love and devotion each of the Romanov family members felt for each other, despite living through the harshest of circumstances. The haunting cover photograph of the Romanov sisters will draw readers, and the extensive bibliography will aid those who want to learn more.

--Ilene Cooper

Review

"Rappaport paints a compelling portrait of Tatiana, Olga, Maria and Anastasia" ?*People*

"A gossipy, revealing story of the doomed Russian family's fairy tale life told by an expert in the field."
?Kirkus Reviews

"In their time, Olga, Tatiana, Maria, and Anastasia were depicted in international accounts as a cute, indistinguishable quartet. But Rappaport brings out each one's character and does it neatly, with a fine touch. . . . While we know that the family's fate will be tragic, the girls don't, and Rappaport, with a light hand and admiring eyes, allows the four Grand Duchesses to grow on us as they grow up." ?*Christian Science Monitor*

"Rappaport is good at showing life within the castle gates... [she] makes a genuinely new, interesting contribution to the Romanov story, which is likely to appeal to both general and specialist readers."
?Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

"In this new volume Helen Rappaport mines a trove of fresh material as she uncovers the lost lives of the daughters of Nicholas and Alexandra." ?*Buffalo News*

"The public spoke of the sisters in a genteel, superficial manner, but Rappaport captures sections of letters and diary entries to showcase the sisters' thoughtfulness and intelligence. Readers will be swept up in the author's leisurely yet informative narrative as she sheds new light on the lives of the four daughters."
?Publishers Weekly (starred review)

"The haunting cover photograph of the Romanov sisters will draw readers, and the extensive bibliography will aid those who want to learn more." ?*Booklist*

"As shocking and immediate as a thriller... [A] gripping read." ?*People magazine* (3 ½ stars) on *The Last Days of the Romanovs*

"Rappaport offers an absorbing, perceptive, and detailed picture of a constitutional monarchy in crisis."
?Publishers Weekly on *A Magnificent Obsession*

“An absorbing account of the making of a queen through her awful, protracted grief.” ?*Kirkus Reviews on A Magnificent Obsession*

“Quite simply, stunning. . . . Chilling and poignant, this is how history books should be written.” ?*Alison Weir, author of Henry VIII: The King and His Court on The Last Days of the Romanovs*

“A fluid and astute writer, Rappaport delivers a historically discerning portrait of Victoria in the 1860s.”
?Booklist on *A Magnificent Obsession*

About the Author

HELEN RAPPAPORT studied Russian at Leeds University and is a specialist in Russian and nineteenth-century women's history. She lives in Oxford.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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