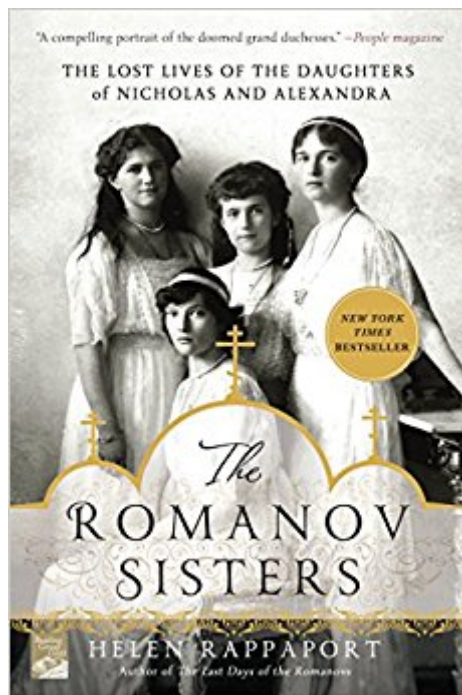




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# The Romanov Sisters: The Lost Lives Of The Daughters Of Nicholas And Alexandra



## Synopsis

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 gentele, 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 Helen Rappaport aims to present a new and challenging take on the story, drawing extensively on previously unseen or unpublished letters, diaries and archival sources, as well as private collections.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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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

--This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

• Rappaport paints a compelling portrait of Tatiana, Olga, Maria and Anastasia • People • A gossip, 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.â • â •Booklistâ œAs shocking and immediate as a thriller... [A] gripping read.â • â •People magazine (3 Â stars) on The Last Days of the Romanovsâ œRappaport offers an absorbing, perceptive, and detailed picture of a constitutional monarchy in crisis.â • â •Publishers Weekly on A Magnificent Obsessionâ œAn absorbing account of the making of a queen through her awful, protracted grief.â • â •Kirkus Reviews on A Magnificent Obsessionâ œQuite simply, stunning. . . . Chilling and poignant, this is how history books should be written.â • â •Alison Weir, author of Henry VIII: The King and His Court on The Last Days of the Romanovsâ œA fluid and astute writer, Rappaport delivers a historically discerning portrait of Victoria in the 1860s.â • â •Booklist on A Magnificent Obsession

I came very close to not requesting a review copy of this book. I thought there was no point. I thought I'd reached my limit on Romanov books - they rarely contain anything new, they're all drawing on the same primary source material and sadly, the Romanovs have reached a point at which they don't even really seem like real people anymore. They're more like copies of characters in some old novel. I am so glad that I went ahead and read this - not only is it one of my few five-star reads so far this year, it will probably become one of my favorite Romanov books of all time. Rappaport is a brilliant writer and researcher. She has accomplished what I did not think was possible - taught me many new things about life in Imperial Russia, about the lives of these four young women and why I should care about them and given me an eerily real sense of that long-ago time. My e-galley copy is filled with highlighted passages and notes - many of them noting places with brand-new anecdotes from previously unpublished sources. I kept coming across them with genuine delight and surprise - I've been reading about the Romanovs for twenty years and never come across some of these stories. Rappaport also has a good ear for excerpting funny, poignant and revealing passages from the girls' letters and diaries. You get a very good sense of their individual voices from reading this book. I feel as though - for the first time - I can actually tell the girls apart and that the differences in their personalities are a revelation. I have a much more nuanced understanding of the Romanov family. Rappaport also managed the almost unthinkable in getting me to feel empathy for the Empress Alexandra. I am not a big fan of hers and believe she was an utterly disastrous ruler, wife and (even) mother. Rappaport looks sensitively at her background and helped me understand Alexandra's troubled mind while not excusing her actions. All in all, a highly recommended work of non-fiction. Despite having received an eBook for review, I will immediately purchase a hardcover copy to add to my collection - it's that good! Disclaimer: I received an advance eGalley from the publisher for review.

This is an incredible book, beautifully written and researched. It is also heartbreaking. I can't tell you how many times I read something about one of the four Romanov sisters, the doomed daughters of Czar Nicholas and Alexandra, that caused me to stop reading and just stare at the faces on the cover. The author brings these young women to life, and it is impossible not to grieve for the innocent, young lives lost too soon. Although the title refers to the four sisters (who referred to themselves as OTMA "Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia"), the book actually begins before the marriage of their parents. Nicholas and Alexandra came to love each other very much; they were absolutely perfect for each other. They were absolutely wrong for the Russian monarchy. Nicholas would have made a wonderful country gentleman. Alexandra was very shy and suffered from health problems that limited her mobility. They were, however, warm and loving persons. How happy they could have been in other circumstances. From Alexandra, Russia expects two things "for her to give birth to a son, and for her to be a social leader. Instead, she is almost invisible except for the disappointing announcements, one after another after another, of the birth of her daughters. And then, while the rest of the world is fascinated by the four Grand Duchesses, in Russia they are viewed as irrelevant and unimportant. The girls live in virtual isolation. The only freedom they have is when they travel, especially on their yacht. They are constantly under threat, and they are constantly surrounded by armed guards. Still, they are brought up to be loving and charitable persons. Their personalities do come across. Anastasia is often a brat. Tatiana and Maria are stalwart. Olga, the oldest, is the most deeply affected by their confinement. She should have long been married and away, but instead she is kept at home. I just wanted to scream how unfair it all was. When they traveled outside of Russia, I wanted someone to stop them from going back. I wanted someone to rescue them, to protect them, to take care of them. This is a wonderful book, and I highly recommend it.

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