



# The Royal Diaries: Anastasia: The Last Grand Duchess, Russia, 1914

*By Carolyn Meyer*

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A novel in diary form in which the youngest daughter of Czar Nicholas II describes the privileged life her family led up until the time of World War I and the tragic events that befell them.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Anastasia is a carefree young duchess, daughter of Nicholas Alexandrovitch Romanov, tsar of all the Russias in 1914. While her father attends to the turbulent affairs of a vast and complex country, Anastasia's major concerns are how to get out of her detested schoolwork to play in the snow, go ice skating, or have picnics. She wears diamonds and rubies, and every morning her mother tells her which matching outfit she and her three sisters shall wear that day. Slowly a hint of future trouble enters her happy, pampered life. Anastasia's younger brother, the future tsar, is a hemophiliac--a "bleeder" who cannot stop bleeding if he is cut or bruised. Anastasia begins to learn that all is not well in the outside world, either. Not everyone in Russia worships her father as she does, and the Germans are about to declare war on Russia. Anastasia's world gradually deteriorates, as reported in her youthful, often playful journal.

As Russia entered World War I, hunger and poverty grew among the peasants, and the Romanov ruling family began to lose favor, culminating in their murders--including Anastasia's--by Bolshevik revolutionaries. This fictionalized diary of the mischievous youngest daughter's last four years gives a fascinating glimpse into a life of unlimited wealth--and the subsequent downward spiral. Historical notes, family trees, and photographs round out Carolyn Meyer's compelling contribution to the popular Royal Diaries series. (Ages 9 to 14) --*Emilie Coulter*

#### From School Library Journal

Grade 4-8--Given to Anastasia by her grandmother as a keepsake, this diary begins on the day after the Winter Ball, January 3, 1914. The 12-year-old is the youngest daughter of the last tsar of imperial Russia, yet beneath the surface of her royal life full of wealth, prominence, and opulence, readers find a typical preadolescent who misses her father when absent. Youngsters will worry over younger brother Alexei's hemophilia, experience concern as Russia comes under German attack, and feel fear and uncertainty during the family's captivity. Anastasia writes of plans for the future, but her diary abruptly concludes on May 18, 1918. Through careful research, the author successfully provides interesting glimpses into daily events, family relationships, and growing up royal. Russian terminology, unobtrusively explained, is carefully blended into the narrative. Entries are simply written, brief, and sometimes unexciting. Lulls occur in some of the everyday events; yet little expressions, mini-tantrums, and exasperation reveal Anastasia's personality, her temperament, and feelings. The epilogue details events leading to the family's assassination. Black-and-white pictures, a bit grainy in quality, pique readers' interest in the Romanovs. Additional information on life in Russia in 1914, historical notes, a family tree, information about the Russian language and calendar, and a list of characters all provide wonderful background information.

*Susan Shaver, Hemingford Public Schools, NE*

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#### About the Author

Carolyn Meyer is the award-winning author of more than forty books for young people, including ANASTASIA: THE LAST GRAND DUCHESS; WHITE LILACS; MARIE, DANCING, a Book Sense Pick; and the Young Royals series. Meyer lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

## **Users Review**

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#### **Dennis Bloom:**

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