



# The Lost Crown

*Sarah Miller*

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## **The Lost Crown Sarah Miller**

Olga, Tatiana, Maria, and Anastasia. Like the fingers on a hand--first headstrong Olga; then Tatiana, the tallest; Maria the most hopeful for a ring; and Anastasia, the smallest. These are the daughters of Tsar Nicholas II, grand duchesses living a life steeped in tradition and privilege. They are each on the brink of starting their own lives, at the mercy of royal matchmakers. The summer of 1914 is that precious last wink of time when they can still be sisters together--sisters that link arms and laugh, sisters that share their dreams and worries and flirt with the officers of their imperial yacht. But in a gunshot the future changes for these sisters and for Russia.

As World War I ignites across Europe, political unrest sweeps Russia. First dissent, then disorder, mutiny, and revolution. For Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia, the end of their girlhood together is colliding with the end of more than they ever imagined.

At the same time hopeful and hopeless, naive and wise, the voices of these sisters become a chorus singing the final song of Imperial Russia. Impeccably researched and utterly fascinating, this novel by acclaimed author Sarah Miller recounts the final days of Imperial Russia with lyricism, criticism and true compassion.

## **The Lost Crown Details**

Date : Published June 14th 2011 by Atheneum

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Author : Sarah Miller

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# From Reader Review The Lost Crown for online ebook

## Elizabeth ?Smart Girls Love Trashy Books? says

-POTENTIAL SPOILERS-

So this has five stars, and for good reason. This is probably one of the best, if not THE BEST, fictional portrayals of the Romanova sisters ever. I learned so much from this book, and to this date is probably one of the few historical fiction books I've learned a lot from about a topic I really like.

All four sisters take turns narrating various events from their lives from 1914-1918, none are left out and their personalities really shine in this book. I was a bit miffed that Anastasia only got about three or four chapters to herself, even though I understood why-the focus needs to be on her other sisters too, not just her since she gets the most media.

Their personalities are exactly on-point in this book, and their last words have stuck with me to this day, especially: "I am Anastasia Nickolaevna Romanova. And I will not let the world forget about me," Olga is hot-headed and anxious, yet sassy and intelligent, Tatiana is stern and obedient, yet charming and fashionable, Maria is soft-spoken and shy, yet kind and caring, and Anastasia is mischievous and a trouble-maker, yet cheerful and optimistic. Their personalities really leapt off the pages for me.

The cover is one of my favorites. The girl looks a lot like Anastasia, she's even blonde, and holding a pearl necklace while wearing a dress resembling one of Anastasia's own dresses. On the back are three other girls that look just like her sisters come to life in color. Whoever did the covers did an amazing job capturing the looks and essence of the sisters.

It's actually kind of sad that this is one of the few historical fiction books about the Romanovs that's actually impeccably historically-accurate to this day, and for this particular age group too. But until another one comes along, I'll happily reread this one again and again.

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## Megan Hillard says

The Lost Crown, a new novel by author Sarah Miller, is an excellent book of Romanov Russia. The book is about the world - famous Grand Duchess Anastasia Nicholaievna Romanov and her elder sisters, Olga, Tatiana and Maria. In alternating chapters narrated by each of the Grand Duchesses, Ms. Miller clearly brings alive the challenges and joys of being a daughter of the Tsar. Each character is very well formed, and different in their own ways - Olga the smart one, Tatiana the beautiful, Maria the sweet, and Anastasia the clown. Each of these girls take very different perspectives on their father's choices, and show how four different girls could form such a bond.

At the beginning is the happy times - aboard the yacht Standart, with their only worry their brother Aleksei's hemophilia to cast a shadow. Almost before the reader knows it, the war occurs, then abdication, and finally house arrest. The girls still hope - for a better life, for escape - but Ms. Miller creates a foreboding attitude near the end of the story, yet still Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia continue to dream of a better life. It ends in a cellar at Ekaterinburg, with the brutal Romanov Massacre. The way Ms. Miller chose to write about the massacre tore my heart to shreds, but after I read the Epilogue, I flipped it over and started again!

The Lost Crown was an amazing book of hope and dreams, sadness and fear, but ultimately, the love and bond of four sisters, whose world was changing around them, and when you finish, you'll be in awe that this actually happened for real - such a sad, tragic story, but Ms. Miller handles it with talent and personality that other authors might not even dare touch. The Lost Crown is a must-read for all teens - and every other Romanov fan, regardless of age.

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## **Katherine says**

*"Where we go next, we go together."*

### **4.5 out of 5 stars**

**Setting:**Russia; 1915-1918

**Coverly Love?;**Yes! I like the girl and the dress she is wearing, and the significance of the pearls on the cover (every time one of the duchesses had a birthday, they would get a pearl to make a necklace).

**Plot:**In this historical fiction based on fact and told from the viewpoints of all four Romanov sisters (Olga, Tatiana, Maria, and Anastatia) as the outbreak of WWI starts and the government of Russia is torn to shreds. It follows the last years of their lives as they describe their imprisonment and isolation.

I liked the author's use of different viewpoints in describing the story. For those of you looking for a happy ending (aka alternate history in which Anastasia survives), you will be highly disappointed. The author stays true to the original story, and the results are heartbreaking.

**Characters:**Well, the main characters are the sisters narrating the story. I love how the author kept their distinct personalities. Olga was the oldest and the most serious, Tatiana was the most beautiful and the one closest to their mother, Maria was the sweet one and Anastasia was the goofy one. Alexei, the tsar and the tsarina also make appearances.

**Pros:**I applaud the author for researching this novel so well, and making it so historically accurate. I also loved her honesty about the events that happened. I have always been intrigued by the Romanov family, and this was a wonderful way to understand them better.

**Cons:**Nothing in particular!

**Love triangle?:**Nope!

**Insta-love?:**Nope!

**A Little Romance?:**Maria has many crushed on the soldiers, and Olga falls in love with one of the soldiers she is tending too, but both never materialize into anything significant.

**Conclusion?:**For those of you who are intrigued with the Romanovs and want a historically accurate book, I would definitely recommend this one.

**Read This!:** Anastasia: The Last Grand Duchess, Russia, 1914 by Carolyn Meyer, Anastasia's Album by Hugh Brewster, and Nicholas and Alexandra by Robert K. Massie.

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## **Erin says**

Find this and other reviews at: <http://flashlightcommentary.blogspot....>

I attempted a fictional account of the Romanovs' last days almost a year ago and I'm still not over the experience. I was and am so disgusted with *The House of Special Purpose* that I almost skipped out on Sarah Miller's *The Lost Crown*. I seriously considered abandoning it at my library's hold desk when they informed me it was ready, but I hate making the librarians process requests for no reason so I schlepped my butt downtown. Four hundred and forty eight pages later, well, let's just say the trip was well worth the effort.

Most fictional versions of the story focus on a single individual, usually one of the younger set and inevitably tackle how they escaped the basement of the Impatiev house and went on after the revolution. I tend to excuse stories published before 2008, but since the official identification of the last two family member, I find my tolerance for such fantasies is extremely limited, especially when they appear without a disclaimer. Yes, I'm referring to *The House of Special Purpose*. I did mention I'm still bitter right? Point I'm getting at here is that Miller's version ends in July 1918 and I found her adherence to what we now know to have happened both admirable and refreshing.

The true genius of *The Lost Crown* can be found in its format. Telling the story from the combined perspective of all four Grand Duchesses must have been quite an undertaking, but her effort pays off in the best possible way. Each girl is distinct and I liked how Miller's treatment of each allowed the reader to interpret them as individuals rather than a combined group. I enjoyed Miller's interpretation of the younger set, but it was the older set that caught my eye. Olga and Tatiana are usually regulated to supporting roles and I relished the opportunity to explore their characters through Miller's fiction.

Another particularly noteworthy aspect of *The Lost Crown* is Miller's exploration of the family's public roles prior to captivity. The book doesn't focus entirely on the glamour and privileges of their station, but also covers the relatively mundane patterns of their daily lives as well as the volunteer work the girls did as part of the war effort. Miller took great care to honor historic context over the course of the narrative and I think that attention to detail sets the novel above much of its competition.

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## **Susan says**

An excellent novel about the last days of the Romanov dynasty, narrated by the four doomed daughters of Nicholas and Alexandra. There are no gimmicks here--no love affairs between the girls and their guards, no survivors of the cellar massacre. All we have is four young women with distinct personalities managing to keep their individuality, their dignity, their humanity, and their affection for their family while their world collapses.

There's also an excellent author's note and a bibliography for those inclined to read more about this subject, as I certainly am now.

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## **Lyd's Archive (7/'15 to 6/'18) says**

Is that...

HISTORICAL ACCURACY???

This is the definitive book on the last Romanov children. It is interesting, historically accurate, and could hardly be described as childish. Miller takes the wise idea to use all four sister to display their unity but also the secrets they keep from each other. I don't think I'll ever forget how Tatiana says "you won't tell the little pair." It's so poignant and beautiful. In addition, it showed how bad Anastasia is as a sole narrator- the "little pair" being Anastasia and Maria - as they lacked so much in political knowledge. While not making Anastasia "the special" it showed a realistic idea of how she thought of herself. I had that quote memorized for some time.

This was also one of few Romanov fiction books that had a solid, concrete theme. Carolyn Meyer attempts one in Anastasia and Her Sisters but "Duty was duty, and we had no choice" made me cringe. Many others don't attempt it. In addition, Miller does not make this strictly Christian but is not afraid to include biblical references. Some may criticize, but the references to Job and Romans brought the latter part of the book alive.

The one thing is, though, avoid using a prologue set in 1917. That was the one thing The Tsarina's Daughter got right.

Pay no heed to the girly cover, some serious people and boys will probably not be caught dead with this one for the sole sake of its cover. I was misled and many others may be as well.

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## **Meghan says**

It is impossible not to enjoy this book. Because it takes place from all four Grand Duchesses' points of views, you fall in love with every one of them. Each one has a unique personality that is displayed throughout the story. The whole book was wonderful, in depth, descriptive, and unique from anything else I have read on the Last Grand Duchesses. However, my very favorite part of this book was the last four chapters, one from each of the girls. You could tell that would be the last you would hear from them, because each one ended with a conclusion where that individual girl thought of her future or her dreams, or was just content. Then, when you finish Olga's chapter and the epilogue, you come face-to-face with a two page portrait of the family. It really was heartbreaking and reminded me of why their story fascinates me so much. All together, a very enjoyable read.

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## **Leigh says**

Chances are without Goodreads I never would've heard of or read this book. I rarely read YA unless it's by an author I love, a subject I enjoy or it comes highly recommended. The Lost Crown met two out of three requirements. For once it was a fictionalized account of the last years of the Romanovs told by the four grand duchesses, not by just one daughter. It also doesn't include forbidden romance or escapes from Impatiev

House. Instead the author does a tremendous job of giving each daughter her own voice and distinct personality. It was easy to tell who was narrating each chapter without having to flip back and check. From Tatiana's prim proper take charge attitude, to Olga's practical yet melancholy views, Maria's gentle kindness and Anastasia who goes from childish and immature to starting to grow up. History came alive and these four young women went from black and white pictures in a history book to the living breathing souls they were. It was heartbreaking when they were separated, their parents and Maria going to Tobolsk while the others stayed behind. The anticipation and joy of their reunion came right through the page, as did the tension as more and more was taken away from them and all began to ponder what their fate would be. The ending I found to be just right, not graphic or gory. After getting to know the young women throughout the book I couldn't have stomached Olga describing her final moments in that cellar room. The ending was as it should be, we all know how it ended and if you don't you should read about it in a history book. Loved the book and might even give the author another try as she knows how to write great historical fiction.

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## **Sarah says**

### *Russia, 1914*

Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia Romanova are the closest of sisters. As the daughters of Tsar Nicolas II and his empress Alexandra, they are fluent in three languages, have lots of gorgeous clothes, and get to spend their summers hanging out on their father's massive yacht with cute young naval officers.

But those officers are strictly off-limits for anything more than minor flirtations. The sisters' mother keeps them isolated from the decadent Russian court—they have no friends their own age. Papa is doting but usually preoccupied with matters of state. Mama's focus is mostly on the girls' brother Alexei, a hemophiliac who wants nothing more than to run around like other boys but is in danger of dying every time he scrapes his knee.

The only other members of this tiny circle are the servants—doctors, Mama's maids, the kids' tutors, Alexei's sailor nanny—and Mama's dearest companion, the priest Grigori Rasputin. Alexandra believes absolutely that Rasputin is chosen by God and has healed Alexei during some of the boy's worst hemophilia flare-ups. Most of her children follow her lead. Only Olga, the eldest and most perceptive, wonders if there's anything off about Rasputin...

Then the assassination of a distant relation throws all Europe, and eventually the world, into turmoil. The Tsar must reluctantly lead an angry populace into battle against Germany. The Tsarina is German, and agitators stir resentment against her.

The four sisters join the war effort. Olga and Tatiana become nurses to tend wounded soldiers. Maria and Anastasia are considered too young for this duty, but they show up to cheer the men with socialization and antics. Even as they find friends and crushes among the soldiers, they're dismayed to hear the whispers about their mom. Gossip claims that Rasputin and Alexandra are lovers, that Rasputin has molested the girls themselves, that Rasputin is the power behind Nicolas and the real Tsar, that Rasputin might well be the Antichrist. That while the Emperor leads his troops against Germany, the empire he left behind is falling apart.

Rasputin is murdered, but his death does nothing to ease the tension. The girls learn that their father has been forced by Russian insurrectionists to abdicate the throne on behalf of himself and Alexei, and the line of

Tsars, stretching back to the coronation of Ivan the Terrible in 1533, is broken. From there, the family is moved from one house arrest to another, enduring more degradation and cruelty at each successive location...All they have left is each other.

### **Content Advisory**

*Violence:* Nothing to speak of in the main body of the novel, except the (not terribly detailed) account of Rasputin's death that Olga and Tatiana hear.

The epilogue, however, gives a fairly detailed account of each family member's demise and an overview of how the bodies were desecrated after.

*Sex:* Anastasia and some of the officers on the *Standardt* prank Olga with a photograph of Michelangelo's David with the head of one of her foreign suitors pasted over the head of the statue. Tatiana is Very Offended, but everyone else present gets a good laugh.

Olga is aware of the tension between herself and a wounded soldier but resigns herself to never resolving it.

Maria is a terrible flirt. She has a moment alone with a young guard at the Ipatiev House that gets misinterpreted by everyone, including her family. From the perspective of the book, nothing racy happened between them.

The more virulently Leninist and/or anti-German guards draw lewd graffiti on the bathroom walls to humiliate Alexandra and the girls. These pictures are never described in any detail. Many of the guards bring in prostitutes and town women every night, and the family can hear them carousing through the walls.

*Language:* Nothing.

*Substance Abuse:* The guards at Ipatiev House are usually plastered and rowdy. The epilogue mentions that the guards got themselves more drunk than usual in order to carry out the execution, and their inebriation contributed to the drawing out and the sadism of the event.

*Nightmare Fuel:* Nothing in the novel itself. The epilogue skims the worst horrors of the assassinations and "burial" but there's enough in there to haunt the very young or sensitive reader.

### **Conclusions**

I first read *The Lost Crown* while sick in bed, ninety-nine years since the outbreak of WWI. I'm rereading it now on the 100th anniversary of the Romanovs' assassinations. The first time, I read it in a single day. This time I made sure to read more slowly and caught a lot of details that I missed the first time around.

This book is written in first-person present-tense, from the perspectives of each of the sisters. I know I complain about first-person present-tense fairly often, because a) every other YA book uses it and b) it doesn't allow for the narrator (and by proxy, the reader) to step away from the narrative every so often and reevaluate things. It's also an immersive style, and many of the dystopias and magical kingdoms in today's trendy books are too shallow to be comfortably immersed in.

But in historical fiction, first-person present-tense narration can be extremely effective, especially when the author does their homework. It's a painless way to absorb all the sensory details of the setting without dragging down the story's momentum. It also avoids the stuffy dialogue associated with some time periods by jumping directly into the head of the protagonist(s). To use a cliché, it makes you feel like you're there.



H.M. Castor pulled it off in *VIII* with an unreliable narrator. Sarah Miller pulls it off here with four reliable narrators...

...and those characterizations are equally impressive. The girls are so close that they can seem like quadrants of a single being—Olga is the bright and sensitive spirit; Tatiana is the subtle but steely backbone; Anastasia is the vibrant and detached mind; and Maria is the gentle, enduring heart. Yet as the book progresses, one can tell which of the girls is speaking without even referring to the name and portrait at the start of each chapter. They all notice and emphasize different aspects of their lives, and employ the metaphors that match their personalities. By the end of the book they've all grappled and made peace with the present situation.

Olga is probably the most complex of the sisters. She can be moody and sullen, and she doesn't think she's all that smart. She's a lot more perceptive than she gives herself credit for, observing quietly, just storing up information for when it's needed. She's also a remarkably disciplined person—for instance, when she falls for one of the wounded young men in the lazaret, she knows she can never marry him, and hides her feelings away in a safe corner of her mind, where she can look upon them without being overwhelmed. Her close relationship with her dad is especially poignant.

Tatiana's perspective says a lot about her by how *little* it says about her. Here's a young woman who pours so much energy into helping the people around her, be they wounded soldiers, her perpetually unwell little brother, or her hypochondriac mom, that she scarcely has a thought to spare for herself. The way she takes care of her mother is admirable; if only it were reciprocal. While the book leaves no doubt that Alexandra loved her daughters, it also appears that she was so absorbed in guilt over Alexei's condition (hemophilia manifests in the male line but is carried by the female), and spiritual codependence on Rasputin, that she wasn't emotionally present for her four girls at a time in their lives when they could have really used maternal guidance.

Alexei's nickname may have been Sunbeam, but the real source of sunshine in the family was clearly Maria. She emerges from the pages as a sweet, well-adjusted, happy kid. She still has flaws, certainly—mostly that she's boy-crazy and a little too trusting. Maria narrates the first chapter, a smart choice on Miller's part, because with Mashka's personality, she seems to put a friendly arm around the reader and pull them into the story with a familiarity that her rather standoffish sisters probably couldn't manage. She's pretty and hyper-feminine, but so tall and strong that she can lift grown men off the floor with her bear hugs. She wants twenty kids, but is strongly implied to be the one daughter whom forensic science has confirmed to carry the hemophilia gene.

Anastasia's voice is the most modern. She has Olga's moodiness combined with a hyperactivity all her own. Some of her antics can be dangerous, some of her witticisms can sting, and in both cases she's a bit slow to figure out why everyone else was scared, offended, or hurt. But this is not a mean kid at all—just a clown who will say pretty much anything to get a laugh. She feels a bit adrift and overlooked in her own family—not old enough to be useful like the two eldest sisters, yet not sweet and cuddly like Maria or the designated center of the universe like Alexei. I never really caught this about her before, but it seemed obvious now that her pranks, wisecracks, theatrical productions starring the family dogs, etc. were simply desperation for someone to pay attention to her for five minutes. That would explain why she seemed so much younger than her years, and was still dreaming of war and safari adventures at an age when Maria was slobbering over the existence of soldiers. Anastasia's most touching relationship is with Alexei. It almost seems that, when she enjoyed charging around the palace or flying off the swing in the compound yard, she was allowing him to experience it through her.

The format and focus of the book can't help but make Nicolas, Alexandra, and Alexei more distant figures

compared to OTMA, but the whole family was so tightly knit that we still get to know them pretty well. The Tsar and Tsarina are shown here to be loving parents, but preoccupied with their son at their daughters' expense, both because of his status as heir and his sickly condition. We also get a feeling for Alexei himself. The poor lad was just stuffed with rambunctious energy that he couldn't let loose. He wanted to climb trees and slide down banisters and roll down snowy hills like his sister Anastasia, but he couldn't do any of this without being closely watched and risking life-threatening injury. No wonder he was obsessed with toy soldiers.

The book doesn't even bother trying to make sense of Rasputin, who dies in the first half. The three younger kids accept him unconditionally because he's Mama's dear friend, and Tatiana, who imitates her mother even as she parents her, honestly believes that the man is holy. Only Olga notices the strangeness of "Otets Grigori" and concludes that hundreds of foul rumors can't all be false. While she knows that there's nothing untoward about his relationship with herself or her siblings, and does not believe that he's having an affair with her mother, she does seriously ponder other tales of his drunken debauchery and schemes for power. She's both horrified and relieved when the man is assassinated. The novel takes no stand on how Rasputin eased Alexei's pain, although many possibilities are briefly acknowledged in the historical notes at the end. That's probably not information that the girls would have been privy to anyway.

As you can imagine, the whole book is pervaded with a sense of loss and dread, but the bond between the sisters prevents it from ever becoming *too* dark. There's even an entertaining bit of black comedy (pgs. 200 – 201) wherein Anastasia is puzzled by a history lesson about three imposters who claimed to be Dmitri of Uglich, a son of Ivan the Terrible who died under mysterious circumstances at age eight. How, she wonders, could anyone who had known Dmitri be taken in by these men? It really bothers her.

(I like to think that Anastasia would have appreciated memes).

My one gripe with the book is the brevity of the historical notes. They contain some great photographs and a meaty bibliography, but leave out a lot of fascinating information. They do not address how the Soviets covered up the assassinations for years, insisting that only the Tsar had been killed on July 17 in Yekaterinburg and that Alexandra and the children were somewhere safe. Even the Bolsheviks knew how cowardly it was to gun down a sickly woman, an even sicklier boy, four young women and a handful of loyal servants. (They also killed Anastasia's dog, Jimmy).

And while the piety of the Imperial Family shines through the novel like seven candles held aloft in a steadily darkening room, the historical notes never mention that Nicolas, Alexandra, and all five children have been canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church. They are not called martyrs, since martyrs die for their faith (although Lenin's hatred of religion is well-documented), but passion-bearers, who faced a violent death *with* faith and a Christlike acceptance. Today, a cathedral—the Church on the Blood—stands on the grounds where they were slaughtered. The Russian Orthodox Church abroad also canonized the servants who died with the family, even though Alexei Trupp was Roman Catholic.

The above decision was not without controversy, since some critics within the Orthodox Church insisted that Nicolas II's apparent ineptitude as a ruler cancelled out his strong character in his personal life. This book

avoids making any political statement of the kind. The girls did not know their father as an Emperor, they knew him as their mild-mannered papa who loved cigars and chopped wood to stay in shape.

I find the cover art and title of the book a wee bit deceptive. The young lady on the front cover is unlikely to be Olga, given her unbound hair. Maria's hair was a darker shade of brown than this, and Tatiana was both brunette and old enough to wear her tresses up. That leaves Anastasia, and she was way too rambunctious at the beginning of the story to sadly finger her pearls while staring into the distance. By the time she was mature enough to ponder anything, she couldn't openly wear her pearls. So, artistic license. It doesn't reflect what's actually happening in most of the book, but it does convey what was lost.

As for the title, I think that the publisher wanted something vague that didn't scream "historical fiction" or "sad ending." I'm also sure that it had *nothing* to do with the surplus of YA books with the word "crown" in the name. Ahem. Anyway, the crown certainly was lost, but that wasn't my main takeaway from this book.

One hundred years ago yesterday, four girls and their little brother were brutally slain for the sins, real and perceived, of their father, their mother, their mother's friend, and their ancestors going back centuries. Let us not forget them.

I can't recommend this book enough.

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### **Jenny Q says**

Setting this aside for later at page 146, but not because this is bad. On the contrary, the writing is lovely and so are the Romanov princesses. At first I was wary of four sisters' POVs, but I was impressed with Miller's ability to give distinct voices to each girl, while at the same time showing how similar they were, and how much they loved each other. They are so sweet, and they try so hard to face the war, and the revolution, and imprisonment with dignity and grace. What happens to them just sucks. I knew what would happen to them going in, but I did a little research online when I started this and I just felt sick reading the accounts of their deaths. I just can't bear to keep reading right now knowing what's coming--I'm really in the mood for some happy endings. I will definitely pick this up sometime in the future.

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### **Megan Hicks says**

Meticulously and lovingly researched, it's hard not to respect the effort that went into *The Lost Crown*. However, I felt that the effort fell a bit flat.

The first problem with *The Lost Crown* is implicit in its premise. Because the reader knows that the Romanov family was murdered by Bolsheviks in July of 1918, it's hard to keep up much sense of suspense. This is made worse by the family's captivity. As many writing instructors will tell you, bored people are

boring. Therefore, a bored, scared family doesn't make for the most fascinating topic for a book.

Miller does her best to keep tensions high between family members and their captors. As the book is not dreadfully dull, she succeeds at making what could be a very boring affair interesting, at least. The pace is, at times, a bit plodding and repetitive, but I have a hard time imagining the topic handled better as a novel.

Miller's biggest stumble, however, is in her decision to split the POV and give each of the Romanov daughters a chance to tell their story. The voices of the grand duchesses aren't very distinctive. In fact, even their personalities meld together a bit. With the constant switching between who is 'I,' it can be hard to keep track of what each sister is like. It takes a very, very long time for each of the young women to become their own person, and in the end, only Anastasia is a truly distinctive character. I believe the book would have been a stronger one had Miller chosen one sister and stuck with her POV.

Still, it's hard to disparage such a heart-felt, lovingly written book. Miller's compassion for the Romanovs is truly what makes the story work. Though to the reader may at times find them outrageously uninformed, it's also easy to settle into the general mindset of the family -- naive, sheltered, and unprepared for the changing world around them.

If you're looking for a page turner, *The Lost Crown* is probably not the best choice for you. However, if you are looking for a well-researched and entertaining introduction to this period in history, I can't think of a better novel.

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## **Gabriel says**

4.5/5 stars ... A heartbreaking story about the fall of the Romanovs

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## **Helen Azar says**

It is generally not easy to find quality historical fiction, and this goes tenfold for fiction about the last Russian imperial family. This book is a definite exception to the rule. Historically accurate down to minute details, and at the same time very well written, the story in "*The Lost Crown*" starts just before the revolution and covers the events that lead up to the assassination of the Russian imperial family. Seen through the eyes of the four historically neglected daughters of the last Tsar - Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia (OTMA), who are usually treated as a collective whole (unless you count trashy novels like "*Tsarina's Daughter*" or Anastasia-"survivor"-pseudo-non-fiction, which of course you shouldn't). In this novel, the sisters are portrayed sensitively and realistically, and most importantly as individuals. They are depicted as neither saints, nor as brats, but as normal girls/young women, as they most certainly were. The novel is told from the perspective of each individual sister, each takes a turn with the narrative. Their personalities develop as each chapter unfolds, and it is all based on historical descriptions of those who knew the girls personally, so it will satisfy even the most "purist" Romanov-phile. OTMA are presented, atypically, as multi-dimensional characters, with numerous factual anecdotes effectively incorporated into each girl's narrative, which adds a lot of reality to the story. At times they are funny, at other times - touching or sad, but they are all very real. IMO, this is arguably the best depiction, fiction or non-fiction, of the ill-fated OTMA sisters. The only thing I would change about this book is the publisher's choice of title, as I don't feel it accurately conveys the book's essence, but I suppose they know better what sells :)

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## **Laura Mabee says**

As an avid Romanov reader, I never liked Romanov fiction.

Many people have tried over and over to capture the Romanovs in fiction, but nobody really managed to capture the Romanovs. The Romanovs were real people who had faults, eccentricities and virtues. Rarely in fiction is the real history taken into consideration when writing.

Ms. Miller has put years of research and dedication into the Romanovs and it shows. Sarah Miller's book captures the Romanovs and I believe *The Lost Crown* has indeed set the bar for future Romanov fiction.

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## **Meg - A Bookish Affair says**

And here I am, continuing on my Russian fiction journey and I am loving it. I love how many books have or are coming out about Russia. This is a historical fiction book told from the point of view of the four daughters of the last Tsar of Russia: Olga, Tatiana, Maria, and Anastasia. It's been awhile since I've read any books or watched anything about the Romanovs and I had forgotten how long they had to wait to find out their destiny. For some reason, I had it in my head that they were taken away from the palace and met their end not long after. In reality, the family was moved from the capital to Ekaterinburg, a coal town in the middle of Russia, where they were basically guarded until the end. I can't imagine just having to wait like that. At least in Miller's book, some of the sisters are still keeping diaries and one of them comments how boring her diary has become as they're not allowed to do anything.

This was definitely one of those historical fiction books that is now going to plant the seed in my head that I need to start reading more about the Romanovs and the Russian Revolution.

I know that the Russians were upset with Tsar Nicholas and his family because they felt like they were really struggling when the family was not at all. However, the two older sisters helped out as nurses to help the wounded military personnel. And the two younger sisters hoped to help out as nurses someday. I thought it was kind of cool that they had gotten training in something like that.

Miller does a great job of pulling you into the story. I think that it was especially effective to tell the story from the point of view of the different sisters as they have really different points of view and things that they are thinking about or worried about. Miller does a good job of keeping all of the voices distinct and separate, which can be really difficult to do sometimes.

Bottom line: This is a great young adult historical fiction that really transcends just being a young adult book.

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