

Across the Fickle Winds of History

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Lulu (October 2006)

Softcover \$12.90 (162pp)

978-1-4303-0953-6

In 1918 the czar of Russia his wife and their five children were gunned down in a basement room of an old country estate where they were being held in exile. Yet even today the exact details of the murders and the events leading up to them remain a mystery.

Cardin brings a new twist in the suppositions about this notorious family. She focuses on the oldest daughter Olga and her story of the family's last years recorded in her diary. Olga finds herself called up to become the next in line should anything happen to her father the Czar. "I was just a girl placed in a position of authority due to my birth." To complicate matters 17-year-old Olga is magnetically attracted to handsome Paul one of three strangers who are discovered by the children on the palace property. There are odd quirks about the strangers that keep the reader concerned that they may be spies from the Bolshevik party or some other group plotting to overthrow the monarchy. The political climate was very unsettled at this point in Russian history with the Czar and his legacy challenged from many sides.

The attraction between Olga and Paul deepens into real love and causes tension at the same time. With assassination attempts and the untrustworthy councils of both Rasputin (to the mother) and the prime minister (to the father) Olga finds herself dangerously trapped in the middle.

In the last chapter (which changes to younger sister Anastasia's voice presumably because Olga is dead) the science fiction concept of time travel is seriously introduced. It is not clear until this last chapter that the author is connecting this bizarre concept with Paul his friends and the disappearance of two Romanov children who were possibly not murdered with the rest of the family. There could be much more free fantasizing about this concept earlier on creating more of a reality for the reader rather than pulling it out of the hat at the very end.

The intrigue quotient is high within the pages of this slim novel but the story leaves the reader wanting a more in-depth portrayal of time travel and what that would do to make history "fickle." It was a creative and surprising theory that solved the murders of the Romanovs and revealed how the regime crumbled from the inside but as Olga says about her role in the political system "It was then I realized it was not to be. History's wind did not blow in that direction."

(August 21, 2009)

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