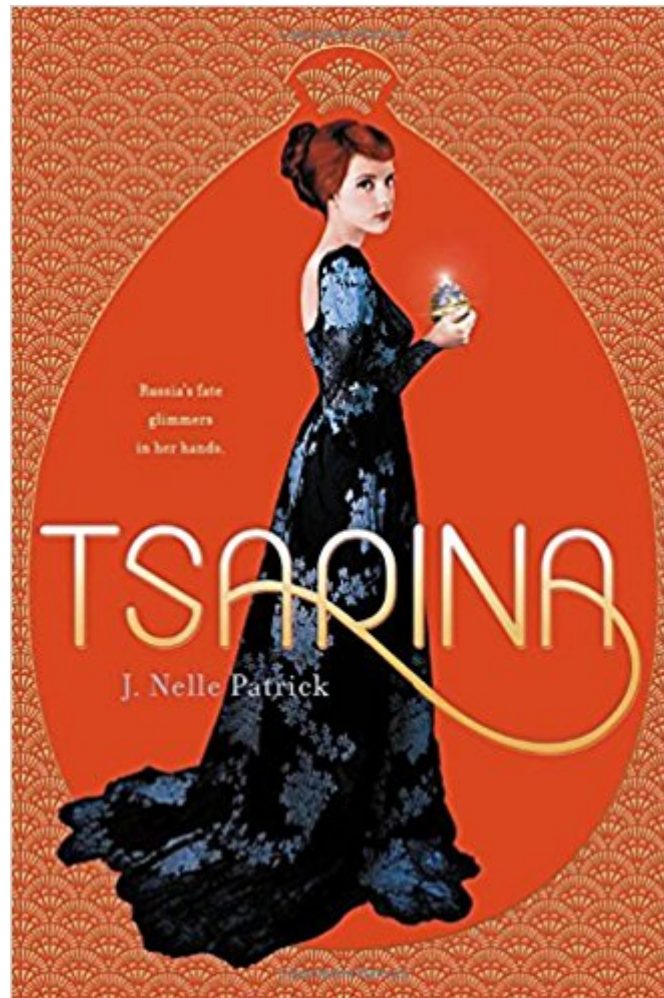




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Tsarina



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Synopsis

"Romance, adventure, magic and history blend seamlessly into a story that is... historically sensitive and gloriously thrilling." --Kirkus, starred review

Natalya knows a secret. A magical Faberge egg glows within the walls of Russia's Winter Palace. It holds a power rooted in the land and stolen from the mystics. A power that promises a life of love for her and Alexei Romanov. Power, that, in the right hands, can save her way of life. But it's in the wrong hands. An epic romance with glittering magical elements, TSARINA is swirling with beautiful prose, stark Russian contrasts, and lavish visuals perfect for fans of Libba Bray's *A Great and Terrible Beauty*.

Book Information

Hardcover: 336 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 23 customer reviews

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Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Europe

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up • Natalya Kutepova and Alexei Romanov are in love, and though she is not of royal blood, everyone expects that Tsar Nicholas II will allow them to be married. Alexei reveals to her a magical secret: before Rasputin was murdered, he poured all of his power into a Fabergé creation known as the Constellation Egg. The power of this egg miraculously protects the Romanov family, including healing Alexei from his hemophilia. But the egg is unable to protect the royal family from revolution: the year is 1917, and a civil war is on the horizon. Alexei and his family are taken by the Reds. In an attempt to reclaim power for Russia, Natalya and her highborn friend Emilia try to retrieve the egg, but they are deceived and captured. What ensues is a desperate search for the

egg in order to claim the power for either the White or Red faction-but there is a dangerous third group at play that cares nothing for politics and everything for power. The characters in this novel don't quite live up to the clearly well-researched historical detail: they're flat and under-nuanced. The two romances in this book are presented as deriving from Natalya's genuine affection for both Alexei and a young revolutionary named Leo, but neither are well developed enough to address the complicated feelings that would likely arise when one begins to have feelings for the enemy of one's true love. The story is fascinating, however, and the details of the Russian Revolution that are included might inspire students to research Russian history and such characters as Alexei Romanov and Grigori Rasputin. —Heather M. Campbell, formerly at Philip S. Miller Library, Castle Rock, CO

Natalya relishes the privileged swirl of life at the Russian imperial court, especially her status as the intended wife of the tsar's son, Alexei. When Alexei shows her the priceless jeweled egg the royal family harbors, she learns of the magical sway this so-called Constellation Egg has in keeping the ruling Romanovs in power. Part fantasy, part historic fiction, the story shifts from palace life to the revolution, as characters fight to save the egg to protect the Romanovs. Can the girl dreaming of becoming tsarina collaborate successfully with a former servant turned Red to rescue the egg from mystics who have taken it to turn the tide of history? Patrick's tale of Russia, Rasputin, and Romanovs packs in suspense, harrowing escapes, and romance. Without heavy-handedness, Natalya's spirited narration affords readers a sense of what led to revolution as well as the catastrophic impact of war. While liberties are taken with the historic setting, the mystics add an intriguing layer of storytelling, as does the egg's supernatural powers at strategic moments. Grades 6-9. --Anne OMalley

Review: Well! I am still trying to find words to describe this memorable, gorgeous and simply breathtaking story. I read so many praising early reviews, but I was still totally caught off guard on how beautiful, emotional and just brilliant it really ended up being. For the moment, my absolutely highlight of the year. So what's so good about his book? Well, what's not! First of all, the prose is vivid, inventive, detailed, descriptive, smooth — it conveys everything necessary and a lot more. I actually felt like I was in the midst of all the places the story took the characters to: St Petersburg, Moscow, the train, the countryside, the Winter Palace, in between the warring Reds and Whites. While I usually shy away from too descriptive books, this one came alive due to that and I loved it for the

images it formed in my mind. The writing was superb! The historical background in which the story took place has always fascinated me and the author was incredibly convincing with all the historical facts and I believe that there was extensive research put into every small detail, this made me respect the author a great deal more. Furthermore, I've read so many books set in different eras, in between huge historical events or even in major city's around the world with extensive history, culture and atmosphere, but most of the time the book just notes that it takes place in this grand place/setting, but when reading the idea simply doesn't reach me and falls flat. I had no such issues here, the story didn't take any prisoners, striking from page one to the last. The plot was quite simple: an aristocrat about to lose everything with the revolution sets out to save the only thing she thinks can restore everything as it was. The story was basically one huge search mission, but that just the skeleton of it. There was so much hope, desperation, wonder, loyalty, discovery, failure and success along the way, which made the story a wonderful journey for me as a reader. Especially since all these emotions the characters were faced with, I too experienced. I also liked the fantasy element of the plot. It was subtle, and not all out Harry Potter, but I felt the magic and mystic powers working perfectly in sync with the adventures of our heroes and the faith of Russia. I also thought the love story was stuff of fairy tales and a complete tearjerker, but maybe not. Knowing what happens to the royal family, I went into the story with the mindset that it was doomed and my heart would be ripped open, stepped on and then run over by a bus and then a steamroller. I wasn't too off the mark, but I didn't expect the turn of events that restored my hope in romance in this book. I don't really want to spoil anything, but let's just say that Natalya genuinely loves her prince and vice versa, but life doesn't stop when things don't work out the way you planned and when a door is closed a window is opened and I kind of adored that "window" opportunity. I thought the ending was stunning in a very simple way as well, somewhat of an open ending, but I felt that everything came full circle.

Characters: Natalya I thought was a great heroine, she was a spoiled aristocrat with the biggest catch as an intended, but she didn't annoy me, she didn't make utterly stupid choices, she didn't complain/whine/act like a child, she wasn't selfish, instead she was heroic, responsible, determined, loyal ok, yes, quite naïve about why the Reds were protesting and fighting for, but I wouldn't expect someone like her to completely understand having led the life she had. Most of all, she absolutely loved her prince and

homeland. Overall: Why aren't more people picking this up? Only a couple of reviews on , only 30ish reviews on Goodreads I can't understand it! So here's my request (demand): please give this a try alone only for how well written this is, if not for any of the other million reasons to read it!

I ABSOLUTELY LOVED THIS BOOK!!! I am very well read, and I loved this book, I love reading, I'm especially interested in historical fiction. This book has everything, magic, history, intrigue, adventure, royalty, and a little romance. Everything a good book has. I cannot recommend this book enough. There are plot twists that keep you on your toes. The author's writing was so beautifully descriptive, but not overwhelming so you get lost. This book reminds me of another series that I ABSOLUTELY LOVE! The series is The Katerina Trilogy. By Robin Bridges. I also HIGHLY recommend it. But overall, I absolutely adore this book. I currently cannot get enough of Russian history novels. I couldn't put it down. Literally. I really couldn't stop reading. I was so sad to finish this book! I want it to go on forever!! Please, I'm hoping the author writes another book as a continuation because this book was fantastic. I loved it. There are no words to describe how much I loved this book.

It's O.K. I've read SO many Russian novels surrounding the Romanov period that they all pretty much sound the same...or similar. It was all right.

If you want a historical based novel with an interesting plot, it's a good read. Easy to put down and pick up again. This story was a little too predictable and banal for me, but kept me entertained on an airplane flight, so it served its purpose.

Besides telling a beautiful and captivating story, TSARINA accomplished two other things for me: 1. Gave me a taste of the Romanovs and left me wanting more. As another reviewer said, "who out there isn't fascinated by the tragic history of the Romanovs?" 2. Made me want to pick up another historical fiction book. Patrick transported me to Russia in the early 1900's and I thoroughly enjoyed it (seems wrong to say with all the horrible stuff going on during that time). Here's what else I liked: Innocence of Natalya and Emilia. Not only was it refreshing in a YA book, but it also seemed so fitting with the time period and the fact they grew up sheltered. I also liked seeing the evolution of Natalya's character from start to finish. The vivid details. This was great. Hands down. Like I said above, TSARINA transported me to Russia. The visuals were so strong and I could easily picture

everything going on. I love when a book includes just the right amount of details. The emotions. They felt honest, raw, and I think Patrick did a great job of capturing them. When the story first started, I had doubts about the love story, but I think it came across as natural and believable. The ending. I like where Natalya ended up and the progression of her story. I do wish a little more of history was tied in with the ending, but I could obviously fill in the holes with what happened next in Russia. As far as what I didn't like: The cover. I don't know. It just didn't do much for me. Overall, beautifully written story. Plus, I love when a book has me itching to read more. I hear J. Nelle Patrick is a pseudonym, so I'll be checking out some of her other books, especially the retellings.

very pleased....

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Tsarina

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