

Characters

Lillya - This is the story of Lillya Englehart, a talented horse woman of Imperial Russia who survives revolution, famine and war. Her father was born into wealth and married into the aristocracy and it's attendant problems. She is introduced to the court of Czar Nicholas II and becomes a favorite of the royal family.

Lillya grows up in a charmed life, as described in the early chapters. She is a celebrity circus performer and favorite of the Czarina. She teaches riding to the Czar's family. She befriends a very talented ballet dancer named Katya who has a daughter named Donatalia who is also a ballet dancer at the Imperial School a few years younger than Lillya's son Vladimir. She becomes worried about the fate of Russia and sends her son Vladimir and the Vronsky family circus to America in early 1905 following the 1905 revolution. During the next 12 years she becomes even closer to the Czarina and her children – teaching them riding and being a frequent guest at the several palaces. She flees Petrograd in 1917 with her husband Anton. Anton is killed and Lillya is taken prisoner by the Red army and is taken to Peter and Paul prison where she is jailed for some period of time.

In prison, she hears about the October revolution and the ascendancy of the Bolsheviks. When she learns that the Czar and his family have been killed by the communists she is grief stricken and mortified.

She narrowly survives the revolution and afterwards is befriended by her old circus colleagues. She continues to work in the circus community and teaches riding during the period of communist rule. In the 1920's and 1930's she spends some more time in prison or in a gulag. During the 1930's she makes amends with Natasha who, over the course of time, has changed her views about the communists and the monarchy. Natasha helps her escape Russia. She comes to the USA in 1941, meets her grandchildren and makes peace with Herve. The theme of her later life will be reconciliation with Natasha, Herve, the revolution and the czar.

Natasha - Natasha (surname TBD) grows up as a servant/companion of Lillya in the wealthy family of Yuri and Angelika Englehart. She was born to Angelika's maid as a result of an affair between the maid and Michael, Yuri's cousin. She is the same age as Lillya, but is sent away to Odessa by Yuri at age 16 because he doesn't want this secret bastard cousin to be part of Lillya's emerging adult life. Natasha matures with her mother in Odessa, learns from her mother that Yuri's cousin Michael is her father but is warned not to tell Lillya about this. Perhaps Michael visits and supports the young Natasha because she is his only child. We need to learn more about Natasha's mother – her name and background in Perm.

As Natasha grows to adulthood in the 1890's in Odessa, she has a career as a translator, linguist and writer. We know from the childhood scenes that she has an eidetic memory and a knack for learning languages. During this time, she marries and has 3 children. She is a political activist and works toward the revolution in 1905 and 1917 – perhaps she is a witness to the events surrounding the mutiny on the Battleship Potemkin in Odessa in 1905 and the subsequent massacre on the steps.

Natasha resents how she was treated by her father Michael and Lillya's father Yuri. She holds a grudge against Lillya and her class for most of her life and this motivates her political activism. She becomes a member of the communist party and perhaps a powerful apparatchik but becomes estranged from the communists after the Holodomor and Stalin's purges. She is appalled when Stalin enters WW2 on the side of the Nazi's but when Germany invades Russia in 1941 she joins the fight against them. She works for the Soviet government in WW2, perhaps with the Americans on the Lend Lease arrangements. She reconciles with Lillya and helps her escape to America. She decides to remain in Russia to carry on the fight.

Angelika Englehart – Lillya's mother and Yuri's wife who suffers from mental illness. She had a youthful flirtation with Yuri's cousin Michael that causes him to have a dalliance with her maid (name TBD) who gives birth to Natasha. Angelika loves the baby so much that she brings young Natasha into her home to be a kind of sister to Lillya – never revealing that Natasha is Lillya's cousin. She dies when Lillya is a young child.

Yuri Englehart - Lillya's father whose overprotective nature causes problems for Lillya. He indulges her and Natasha as children as well as his wife Angelika. He whisks Lillya away from France when he learns of her interaction with Herve and destroys his letters to her and does the same for any correspondence between Lillya and Natasha.

Anton Vronsky - Lillya's wire-walking, circus leading husband and father of Vladimir. His father is Dmitri, owner of the Vronsky family circus. His wife is the horsewoman Petra, Vladimir's mother. Yuri Englehart and Anton Vronsky will both die at the hands of the Reds.

Michael Englehart - Yuri's cousin falls in love with Yuri's wife Angelika and in an attempt to make her jealous he will have an affair with her maid (name TBD) who gives birth to Natasha. His wife Greta does not bear him any children. He secretly spends time with Natasha and her mother. He will be betrayed to the Red Army in 1917 by Greta because of her bitterness surrounding his love of Natasha and her children. He is killed by the Reds.

Greta Englehart - Wife of Michael. She has a long simmering resentment of the cavalier behavior of Yuri and Michael. Michael married her for money after Angelika rejected him and she never bears him any children. She betrays Michael, Anton and Lillya to the Reds at the encouragement of Helena.

Helena - Wife of Nikolai, the Kungur priest who first suggests to Greta that she can turn Michael over to the Reds and survive on the Englehart family jewels. Perhaps Helena later betrays Greta to the Reds.

Herve Laurent Fleury – As a young cadet at the Cadre Noir he falls deeply in love with Lillya. He asks her to marry him and gives her his most precious possession, an emerald brooch that he inherited from his patron, an old French cavalry officer. He is heartbroken when she leaves him and is deeply embittered by his experience with her. He spends nearly his entire life filled with resentment – as is depicted in *Circus of the Queens*. He comes to terms with it and redeems himself at the end of *Circus* but he is quite surprised when Lillya comes to visit him in Charleston at the end of the second book. They have a quiet reconciliation in the final scene.

Prisoners, Guards, and other additional characters with names like Julietta, Paul Blatsky and Katrina and the group of women that Lillya joins in an abandoned shed are used as needed. They are mentioned only once and can be expanded or deleted.

Story Outline

The book is composed of two alternating time lines in the life of Lillya one on the odd numbered chapters and one on the even numbered chapters. The book has a short prologue of Lillya riding like Pegasus flying, then 52 numbered chapters and an epilogue – similar to the structure of *Circus of the Queens*.

The odd numbered timeline begins with the party at the palace in December 1916 and ends with Lillya meeting Herve/Laurent again in November 1941. This timeline must be augmented with information about Lillya being captured by the Red Army in 1917 and what follows in her life in communist ruled Russia in the 1920's and 1930's. This period will include Lillya surviving as a circus performer and riding teacher in Soviet Petrograd. Eventually, Natasha will find her, reconcile and help her get to America in 1941 by, perhaps arranging travel to the UK on a Lend Lease convoy returning from Arkangel. She will fly to Gander, New Foundland with US pilots returning from delivering bombers to England. She may meet a young Russian stowaway on the ship who she brings along with her to Savannah. Finally, Lillya will have a scene in Charleston with Herve/Laurent. This chapter will be #53 but named Epilogue.

The other timeline on the even numbered chapters begins with Lillya and Natasha playing as very young children in about 1875. Lillya was born around 1868 and her experience with Herve takes place around 1884. She marries Anton in 1885 and gives birth to Vladimir in 1887. (These dates can be shifted a bit. The only fixed date in both books is that in *Circus of the Queens* Donatalia is born around 1891. She dances at the Winter Palace with Vladimir in 1904 (when he is 3 or 4 years older than she?). Lillya has become a friend of Donatalia's mother Katya a dancer married to Pele Petrovsky. One day Katya is given the emerald brooch that Herve had slipped into Lillya's pocket. Perhaps Pele or Katya admired it. She does tell them that it was the gift of a special friend (or something like that). Donatalia is given the brooch by her mother and she

admires it. Consequently, it gets packed into her suitcase by herself before she goes to America in 1905. Herve/Laurent the man who gave Lillya that same brooch is coincidentally on the same boat.

Lillya has a charmed life in the 1890's and first years of the new century but after 1905 things begin to crumble. Vladimir and the Vronsky family circus are sent to America in 1905 but Lillya and Anton stay and share their life with the Czar's family. They send some of their family jewels to Vladimir in 1916 and these are only found years later in Circus. More needs to be written to cover the years between 1905 and 1917 - especially about the Bloody Sunday of 1905, the mutiny on the Battleship Potemkin and the killing of peasants on the Odessa Steps. These events might be witnessed and written about by a 35 year old Natasha. Lillya and Anton sent their son to America in 1905 and during the next 12 years they read letters and newspaper clippings about the circus. They learn about Vladimir's four daughters and that he has renamed the circus as "The Circus of the Queens" – they are joyful. We should expand on Lillya's adult relationship with Natasha and the story of Michael and Natasha's mother. Perhaps, Lillya and Natasha meet again after many years – neither realizing that Yuri destroyed the letters sent between them as teenagers. Just as he had done with Laurent's letters to Lillya. They become estranged because Lillya doesn't know that Michael is Natasha's father and that she and Natasha are cousins. Perhaps Lillya introduces Natasha as the daughter of her childhood maid and Natasha is offended.

The childhood timeline on the even numbers ends in chapter 52 about where the other timeline begins in chapter 1, perhaps just before the scene at the big party that opens the book. This chapter will reveal why Lillya and Anton felt they had to make an appearance at the party - perhaps they have realized that imperial Russia is coming to an end. Perhaps that night Rasputin will be murdered and in the following days they are barred from the company of the Royal family. The February revolution and the abdication of the Czar must be covered in one timeline or the other and should be positioned to have the best dramatic effect perhaps straddling both. This time period is the pivotal moment in the collapse of the Romanov dynasty. Reference can be made to the day in February 1917 when the Petrograd Garrison troops refuse to fire on the protesters, shoot their own officers and join the revolution. The Czar abdicated four days later bringing an end to 300 years of monarchy.

An additional note that can be applied to the story in several places:

All the Russian characters regard the United States as the obvious destination for an escape from Russia. They have an idealized and affectionate view of the USA based upon literature, movies and media. One or more of the characters in Lillya has an avid interest in the history of the United States and its relationship with Russia. Perhaps the young Vladimir studies maps of North America and observes that the Russian empire once included Alaska and much of the northwest coast of America going as far south as Fort Ross in Northern California. He laments the sale of Alaska to the USA in 1867. Just think, Russia could have had a border with California! Perhaps, Natasha reads the works of Thomas Paine, Jefferson, Hamilton, Mark Twain and others and loves American Wild West stories and movies like Charlie Chaplin's City Lights. She notes

that the Russian Czarina, Catherine the Great helped the US in the Revolutionary War and Czar Alexander II helped President Lincoln in the US Civil War. In turn, the US provided Lend Lease support to the Russians fighting the Germans in WW1 as they will also do in WW2.