

The background features a complex network of white nodes and lines, resembling a constellation or a data network. The nodes are of varying sizes and are connected by thin white lines. The overall color scheme is a gradient from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The text is centered and white, providing a high-contrast look against the background.

# Romanov

Written by Nadine Brandes

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Published by sanmarco-sf

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Romanov

# Romanov

By Nadine Brandes

## Romanov Family

The history books say I died.

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## Romanov Dynasty

They don't know the half of it.

## Romanov Family Tree

Anastasia "Nastya" Romanov was given a single mission: to smuggle an ancient spell into her suitcase on her way to exile in Siberia. It might be her family's only salvation. But the leader of the Bolshevik army is after them . . . and he's hunted Romanov before.

## Romanov Execution

Nastya's only chances of survival are to either release the spell, and deal with the consequences, or enlist help from Zash, the handsome soldier who doesn't act like the average Bolshevik. Nastya's never dabbled in magic before, but it doesn't frighten her as much as her growing attraction for Zash. She likes him. She thinks he might even like her . . .

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## Romanov Real Estate

That is, until sheâ€™s on one side of a firing squad . . . and heâ€™s on the other.

Any ANASTASIA fans in the room?

I have been DYING to share this news with everyone! ROMANOV will be another historical fantasy standalone. And now that I'm squealing, I'm at risk of revealing spoilers (BECAUSE I'M THAT EXCITED.) For those who want a teensy more info about the book's inspiration, you can find it in my dorky YouTube announcement.

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## Romanovs Show

\*\*\*Advance Review Copy generously provided through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

The Romanov family fascinates people for a century. Well, their end does.

And I was curious what Nadine Brandes would do with the story. And mainly how she's going to end the story, that's what I'm always curious to see.

I believe that the book had great potential. However, it seems a bit like a miss. Like the story is always the one note away for me to really enjoy. But it's still an enjoyable read, an \*\*\*Advance Review Copy generously provided through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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Roughly the first 60% follow the Romanov family from Tobolsk to Ekaterinburg. Here, it seems very precise. The author then said that she did a lot of research. However, it seemed like she mainly used the Wikipedia article about the Execution of the Romanov family. There are some sentences that seem very similar. Or they might have the same source. (No judgement, only stating my subjective feeling). However, the result is that it seems a bit textbook said from the POV of a teen girl. And I'm not sure this is the desired result.

Then the last 40% is a fiction. Following the myth that Anastasia and fully developing the fantasy element of this book.

Strangely enough, I prefer the textbook beginning. Why? Because there it at least makes sense.

Unfortunately, the author seems to be lost when she suddenly does not have a history to follow. What to do now? And suddenly there are so many problems for me to unsee.

I have several things I need/want to point out.

- There is a lot of Russian words used to describe things. Budenovka, fortochka, droshky. I understand all of them. But, I really doubt that someone who does not speak a Slavic language will know all of them. And unfortunately, it is not a good thing to be forced to google things, especially in fantasy. Also, I saw



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that several times the Russian was done wrong as well. In a basic sentences. If I remember correctly the "Good morning" was wrong.

- The Romanov family was shown as the nicest people ever. And while I understand that of course, Anastasia would love her parents... It does not work. The author claims extensive research, but here I believe she fails. Nikolai was very much a family man who loved his wife and children. But, he was a very bad tsar. Meek. Under the influence of his wife who was HATED by the Russian people. But here Nikolai is suddenly the perfect leader who leads his family and supposedly was a devoted leader to his people. It seems fake. Romanticised. (But I have to say that I loved the relationship in the family! Well written).

- The book should have started at a different point; not everyone is familiar with the Revolution and the Romanov family. If the book started maybe with the abdication, it would make more sense. Explain why Nikolai was forced to abdicate. Why people hated him and his wife. Explain Bolsheviks, Mensheviks. Why the revolution started, how badly the Russian people were affected by the First World War. And I wish Grand Duke Michael was at least mentioned in the book.

- This is one of the problems. People need knowledge. One time Nicholai talks about his cousin King George V of the United Kingdom. But he does not say his name and people are left guessing. Or confused. (view spoiler)[From the book it sounded as if Nicholai was hurt that George did not take them to Britain to save them. But he did not know that George refused; he believed that it was the UK's government! So, do not try to be historically correct and then drop things like that. (hide spoiler)]

- There is a lot of talk about the White Army, but once again I felt like it was very confusing unless you know the history. And by the way, correct me if I'm mistaken. But wasn't it the Czechoslovak legion that was reaching Ekaterinburg? They were going East so that they could go back to Czechoslovakia if I remember correctly.

- Also, Maria went with her parents first and once they left her sisters sewed the jewels in their dress. So, how is it possible that Maria wore jewellery in her dress as well in the end? The jewels had to be put there before leaving Tobolsk but they started to do it once Maria left.

- Do I have any Russian friends here? If yes, please, help me here. Zash. I'm really confused by the name. I know the name Zasha exists, but I never saw Zash. I know that Зашитник (zashchitnik) means defender. But is there Zash as a name?

- Also, Zash is supposed to be from an aboriginal tribe from Siberia, but his description makes him sound more Scandinavian than Siberian.

- Talking about Zash. (view spoiler)[ The supposed romance between him and Anastasia does not work. At all. (hide spoiler)]

(view spoiler)[Oh my main issue! The anjin spell takes them into a shadow world or whatever and

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whatever happens to their bodies after that will be erased. But not before. Anastasia says it after the execution while lying in a car. And then when they come back, she only has bruised ribs. The way they were killed was a massacre. They were butchered; there is no way she would be shot only one time. They would put more bullets in her and then take a bayonet on her. This is nonsense! (hide spoiler)]

- And the ending: (view spoiler)[ Anastasia asks to be buried with her family. And it's true that she and Alexei were found in a different grave. But still, I don't like this because if they lived a long happy life and then they were buried with their family, their skeletons would be of old people. I know fantasy... but still. And talking about this I just want to point out that the point where Alexei tells the soldiers that he is now the tsar there is no way they would just let him go! If they were truly the Whites, Alexei is the most important thing to them. They would have stayed with him, protected him and tried to get him to their leaders. They would have not just waved goodbye and watched as they went back to the enemy. (hide spoiler)]

- Also, Anastasia is injured if only cracked ribs, but she was starved for months with a minimum of exercise. She's wearing a skirt, corset and heavy coat. But suddenly she's able to walk for a day while carrying her brother. Then she manages to jump out of the train on a horse and then from horse to the train... Oh, I almost forgot, MOVING train. I'm saying no. Making her a superhero is stupid and I hated this part.

- The problem with this book is simple. It tries very hard to be historically correct but always fails in small things which matter. And it does not work with the fantasy element. I want to believe that if it was fantasy all along, different names, different family, setting it might have worked. This book needs to be more fantasy, or more historically correct, the mix right now is very in between and seems artificial. ...more

well, i started using netgalley.

my tbr should fear me.

## Romanov Empire

This was definitely the type of Anastasia retelling I have been waiting for!!! I already knew I'd love this book before I picked it up, I mean pfft have u seen Fawkes which is a magical Guy Fawkes retelling that exploded into my life and I am still thinking about a year later?!? Exactly. Nadine Brandes does the best HF retellings...but adds in magic and heartbreak and endings that cut deep, but also aren't hopeless. I love that balance. Love it.

\*:Â·î¼ÿâœ§ | PLOT | \*:Â·î¼ÿâœ§

If you know the history of the This was definitely the type of Anastasia retelling I have been waiting for!!! I already knew I'd love this book before I picked it up, I mean pfft have u seen Fawkes which is a magical Guy Fawkes retelling that exploded into my life and I am still thinking about a year later?!? Exactly. Nadine Brandes does the best HF retellings...but adds in magic and heartbreak and endings that cut deep, but also aren't hopeless. I love that balance. Love it.

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If you know the history of the Romanovs, then you know...this isn't a light quirky story ok. It gut-wrenching. It picks up when the Romanov family are in exile, banished to a house where they need permission to even open a window. It's basically a waiting game, while they're promised a fair trial, but they're dreading being executed. So the plot isn't an action-adventure...we feel trapped and stagnate with Nastya. We feel the dread and the thin hope as maaaaybe the White Army will save them. I would've liked to have seen them in their palace life though?! I wanna prequel. ðŸ—

\*:Â·î¼ÿâœ§ | MAGIC | \*:Â·î¼ÿâœ§

ok something I love about Brandes novels is how she weaves magic in so flawlessly you kind of forget...history...didn't have magic?! It's incredible. We have spell ink here, so you can learn the words and write the spells and they sink into your skin. And isn't that an awesome magic system?! 10/10. With Rasputin dead, Nastya is the only one who can do a little magic (she desperately wants to learn to be a full spellmaster) and she can give Alexei a little relief from his illness with spells. But the ending goes BADASS with the magic and it's phenomenal, clever, and heartstopping.

\*:Â·î¼ÿâœ§ | CHARACTERS | \*:Â·î¼ÿâœ§

the story is Nastya and she holds onto life with all the love and fierceness of a girl who knows she has potential and the world cannot break her. Nastya is such an optimist! She's a mischief-maker and a sweetheart and she refuses to be beaten down, emotionally or spiritually. afkdlsad I do love her. And she has such a sweet relationship with her 13yo brother, Alexei, who has haemophilia and he's so sick. He spends a lot of the book in a wheelchair too. While I can't speak of any personal experience with his disability/illness, I do feel like the disability rep was done with such love and care. Making !!! me so !!! happy !! Also he's a sassy little spitfire and I nearly choked laughing when he interrupted Nastya and

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Zash just as they were having a Moment. (He also shipped them so loudly, so like ðŸ™,Alexei is adorable.)

Now Zash...ah, our love interest. He is a troubled scowling boy, a guard of the Romanov family in their house-arrest prison, and I liked that the book didn't force him and Nastya into a whirlwind romance. Their relationship was tentative and more of a promise. Which was good because captor/captee romances need to be done veeery carefully.

ALSO THERE WAS A DOG AND I LOVE THE DOG AND I PANICKED OVER THE DOG BUT ALL IS WELL WITH THE DOG. ðŸ™• ðŸ• »

\*:Â·î¼ÿâœ§ | OVERALL | \*:Â·î¼ÿâœ§

it's one of those book that balances such darkness with the light. It's a brutal plot line, full of cruel intentions and unfair circumstances. And while it does follow history a lot, so you WILL get your heart smashed, it takes spins and twists you don't expect. I loved that about it (brb sobbing tho). Nastya also explores a heavy theme of forgiveness, and whether it is worth giving. While I'm not big on forgiving evil, I did appreciate how Nastya was so soft and yet so strong with her choices here. Afdsjakld she is a gem.

...anyway you need this. It's ANASTASIA!!! and it is magical, powerful, and thoughtful. ...more

I liked Romanov. Really, I did.

But.

The setting wasâ€¦! ho-hum. What should be descriptions of places were instead inconsequential, uninspired snippets of text. Sure, there was the whole house arrest shebang, so it'd be unfair of me to fault the setting for being as claustrophobic as it was, but I can fault the writing for being bland and undescriptiveâ€”after two hundred pages, I should have a better sketch-out of the house than just the fact that there was, uh, a couple of rooms. Oh, and stairs. I liked Romanov. Really, I did.

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Which brings me to the feeble worldbuilding.

So much wasted potential and it's just. So. Frustrating.

For the most part, the worldbuilding was lost in a sea of vague, confusing information, and on top of that, there was nothing to anchor the details to anyplace specificâ€”or in this case, to twentieth-century Russia.

Not to mention, I am so, so cheesed off. I mean, seeing as how the Russian Revolution was happening at the protagonist's literal doorstep, I was hoping that at some point, I'd read something aboutâ€¦! hmm,

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an actual revolution? But nope, nada. Moving on.

Then there was the plot—which, to be honest, felt more like two mismatched halves than a whole. Alright, so I did like the slowness of the first half. The unfortunate thing was that this slowness worked against the novel later on; going into the second half, there was a significant pickup in speed—and it was jarring enough to pull me out of the ride.

What's more, some parts of the plot were incredibly contrived—aaand I'll leave it at that, lest I start yanking my hair out.

Regardless, there was something about Brandes' portrayal of the Romanovs that touched me. The fabric of their lives worn and unravelling at the seams. And the unwavering thread of love running in between, binding them all together.

In which case, I have to applaud Brandes for her writing, for her playful yet elegant turn of phrase which imparted such a fierce vitality to Nastya's voice.

And the truth is, I adored Nastya, whose hope shone bright and unrelenting throughout the darkness and despair. Someone who possessed a deep compassion for all her people, who loved friends and enemies alike. Because in the end, Romanov was as much triumphant as it was tragic—a story about suffering and loss, but above all, about survival and forgiveness.

3.0/5

note: thank you to Nadine Brandes and Thomas Nelson for the ARC! This review reflects my honest thoughts, and although I know I wrote more about the bad than the good in this review, I'm not discouraging people from reading this, because I did appreciate this book for what it was. And like I said, it did touch me in the end :) ...more



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this fictional magic system does. I soon found out.

On page 11:

"Thirteen years ago, I'd watched Mamma and Papa open a layer of that painted doll and release the now-forbidden spell that brought us Alexei."

[Alexei being her younger brother.]

Yes. You read that right. These people have a magic spell that allows them to conceive a human baby.

And not [if I'm reading this correctly] to 'help' conceive, not to cure dysfunction or whatever; but to literally, directly conceive a child. To create new life where none existed.

Do you See \*rubs nose pensively\* do you Begin to See where the Problem might lie, Jeeves?

Real talk: I am not comfortable with seeing the power to create life allocated to human beings, through magic, even in a fantasy world with no God. But, this ISN'T a fantasy world with no God!!! This is our real, historical world, populated with real historical figures who profess to believe in God and Jesus and the Bible; and yet, when they wanna make a baby, they turn to magic and not to prayer. Which is . . . disturbing. The fact that this magic [allegedly, according to the story logic] ACTUALLY WORKS is 1000x more disturbing.

Like. Would you mind telling me, Mr. and Mrs. Romanov--would you mind telling me just WHO you imagine sent you this baby; and WHAT he/she/it/they might stand to gain in return?

Moreover, I'm not at all comforted by Nastya's assurances that this baby-creating spell is now "forbidden." Sure, maybe they don't use it any more; but they used it at least once? And it worked?? And now they have this living, breathing kiddo walking around who (by their own admission) was FedEx'd to their parents' bedroom from Somewhere in the Cosmos, and definitely not from the Big Fella Upstairs??? I can't get on board with that, people. I just can't.

The ONLY WAY I could continue reading this book with a clear conscience is if I had assurances that the whole point of the story would be overthrowing the magic system--if Nastya's character arc were aimed at her realizing that Rasputin had led her whole family astray and that she should never touch any of these spells, ever again. That, however, isn't the impression I get from other readers. In fact--I've been told that the climax involves Nastya using a spell to (view spoiler)[resurrect dead folks. Which is just . . . whaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaat?!?! Now you have power over life AND death, apart from God's power?? Just who do you think you are???? (hide spoiler)]

(view spoiler)[EDIT: I've been given more information about the dead-people thing and honestly I feel MORE disturbed than before: So, basically, Nastya uses a spell that allows you to remove your own soul

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from your body, for 'safekeeping' if someone's trying to kill you, and then have the soul return to the body [with all physical damage erased] by using the spell again after the danger is passed. One could argue that this doesn't equal "resurrection from the dead," since the person doesn't technically "die"; but I would argue that's EXACTLY what it equals, given that the definition of 'death' is separation of soul from body, and the definition of 'resurrection' is reunion of soul with body. If Nastya is using a spell which allows her to reanimate her own, previously soulless body . . . then that is self-resurrection in a nutshell, since it's precisely what Jesus Christ did on Easter Sunday. And that, my dudes, is what we call Theologically Problematic.

(At least from my point of view.) (hide spoiler)]

Life is sacred. There is a reason we mere mortals don't get to control it. It should stay that way. Even in fantasy, I believe, it should stay that way.

And Rasputin was horrible.

Thanks for coming to my TED talk.

\*peace out\* ...more

This review has been hidden because it contains spoilers. To view it, [click here](#).

Hi, my name is Erin. I have been under the spell of books since I first met Anne Shirley at age 7. Some stories/periods of time I will return to again and again. I am not here to recover, I just attend to get more recommendations and eat these cookies.

This historical fiction/fantasy standalone takes readers to Russia in 1918 where Tsar Nicholas and his family are being imprisoned by the Bolsheviks. One hundred and one years later, the tragedy of Russia's royal family still captivates many, including this particular reader. I liked Romanov but I didn't love it.

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The story is told through the eyes of youngest daughter, Anastasia (Natsya) Romanov. Imprisoned with her parents Nicholas and Alexandra, sisters; Olga, Tatiana, and Maria and brother Alexei, Anastasia brings to life the families last months of life. Rich in historical detail, what has been passed down about the Romanov's and their guards is all there on paper. Nadine Brandes adds some dark magic and spells to push her narrative a little farther in scope.

Now I have read previous books that discuss alternative history from Anastasia, Maria, and Tatiana's point of view and how they escape from their tragic fate. Aside from the magic that is new, I felt there



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was a lot of sameness in this book. The romances with guards, the Rasputin subplot, and the promise that whatever character has survived is going to live this incredible life albeit in secrecy. I wanted a bit more fireworks for this story.

All in all, the release of this book is definitely going to bring the story forward to a whole new generation of readers. My hats off to Nadine Brandes for her dedication to getting her version of the story out there. I wish it had happened that way.

Goodreads review 07/05/19

Publication Date 07/05/19

Â I received a complimentary copy from Thomas Nelson through NetGalley. Opinions expressed in this review are completely my own. ...more

## Romanov Jewels

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From the author of *Fawkes* comes a magical take on the story of Anastasia Romanov.

The history books say I died.

They don't know the half of it.

Ever since I read *Fawkes*, I knew I loved Nadine's writing, and when *Romanov* was announced, I couldn't be happier. As I have spend my childhood and young adult life in the Balkans, whilst travelling across Europe, I have always admired Russia, and always enjoyed reading all the theories about the Romanov fam [Blog](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Pinterest](#)

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As a child I would be told stories and fairy tales, I would watch the Disney adaptation of *Anastasia*, and as I was growing up, I would read history books and fiction on this very subject. When I got my hands on *Romanov*, I knew I would be up for an adventure, with lots of expectations, but what I never knew was that I would be blown away of how beautiful this book is!

This book is split into two main parts, before and after the Romanov's execution, but it is also split into the first being the historical part, and the second being the fictional part. Both parts of the book are quite intense, and very different emotions come up to surface, but they are both very powerful throughout, and fitted together quite well.

In the first part, we are introduced to the Romanov family, and how they are kept as hostages by the Bolsheviks. It would've been much better if we had more details on the pre-hostage period, why the revolution began, why the king abducted the throne, who are the Bolsheviks and what they believed in. The book starts in the middle of this whole situation, and whilst I knew the beginning before, I am certain a lot of people wouldn't have.

The history, as much accurate as it was, also had a personalized feeling that the author wanted to give. I have to admit, a lot of the details, especially around the family were quite accurate. The family did stick together and loved each other, they did have secrets and they did make friends with their captors. Anastasia's brother did indeed have hemophilia and Rasputin was allegedly helping him. However, the author decided to put her personal feelings into the history as well. The king is presented as a wonderful leader that cares about the people. I understand that we see this story from Anastasia's point of view, and as his daughter, she is supposed to see her father as the best figure in the world. But I still believe this part should be more objective, if not from Anastasia's point of view, then at least by the king's actions and dialogues. The other big element that bothered me was the portrayal of Rasputin. He is shown in this book as a family helper and a kind man, when in fact, he was far from that. In the history books, he is described as a madman, a creepy person, and the king was not happy of him coming in the house. The family's secrecy and the queen's silent domination over the king, together with Rasputin's doings were the start of the revolution, and I believe that it one of the required truths that this books should have included, but didn't. And that troubled me.

On top of this, is the Russian language used throughout this book. There were a lot of spelling errors, and misinterpretations. And whilst I can understand these words, many people can't, and translation wasn't provided in the book. Also, I really found this quote interesting, talking about the Russian culture, and how they don't show emotions. Just a note "this is most of the time true, people won't be nice to strangers, but actually, Russian people are quite friendly and emotional as well.

"We Russians weren't required to share any amount of emotion we didn't want to."

Apart from these few things that slightly bothered me, I really enjoyed this book. Anastasia is an amazing character, and through her we can see her love towards her family, her country, and even towards the people that wish her harm. We get to see her love, cry, be hurt, be afraid, forgive, and grow throughout the book, and her journey was magical.

"As I lay in the grass next to the spell that could rid me of heart pain, I realized that a part of forgiveness was accepting the things someone had done and the pain that came with that and moving on with love. Forgiveness was a personal battle that must always be fought in my heart."

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I loved the beginning of the book the most. The setting was well-written, and I got the feel the same way as the Romanov family did. They tried to act as if everything was normal, when in fact, they were held captive, and moved out of their home. They weren't allowed to go out in the garden often, and when they did have this opportunity, they enjoyed every single second of it. And they all had hope every single day. They kept smiling and stayed together.

There are number of scenes that will always stay close to my heart – the relationship between Zash and Anastasia (as unrealistic as it might be), always kept me on my toes, his desperation, and his guilt, and her ability to forgive and love regardless.

The brother's illness, and his persistence through it. His motivation and his will to never give up. The love he holds for his family, and especially his sister Anastasia, and the toughness and not letting go. A few scenes were unrealistic with him, as I hardly believe anyone suffering from hemophilia can survive all those injuries mentioned in the book and the pools of blood, but above all – this character did achieve what he was meant to do – show hope where there is none.

A wonderful and magical tale, with a history behind it of a mysterious family, especially their end – this book brought tears on my eyes and made me think about the power of forgiveness and love. A true masterpiece.

Thank you to Nadine Brandes, for letting me be a part of her Ninja Team.

Thank you to the publisher, Thomas Nelson, and NetGalley, for providing me with a complimentary ARC copy in exchange for an honest review.

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This was an interesting read, while getting to know more about the Romanov family. The book is beautifully written with a family bond. I just think historical fantasy/fiction isn't my favorite genre!