



Stalin's Daughter: The Extraordinary and Tumultuous Life of Svetlana Alliluyeva

By Rosemary Sullivan

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Winner of the Plutarch Award for Best Biography

PEN Literary Award Finalist

National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist

New York Times Notable Book

Washington Post Notable Book

Boston Globe Best Book of the Year

The award-winning author of *Villa Air-Bel* returns with a painstakingly researched, revelatory biography of Svetlana Stalin, a woman fated to live her life in the shadow of one of history's most monstrous dictators—her father, Josef Stalin.

Born in the early years of the Soviet Union, Svetlana Stalin spent her youth inside the walls of the Kremlin. Communist Party privilege protected her from the mass starvation and purges that haunted Russia, but she did not escape tragedy—the loss of everyone she loved, including her mother, two brothers, aunts and uncles, and a lover twice her age, deliberately exiled to Siberia by her father.

As she gradually learned about the extent of her father's brutality after his death, Svetlana could no longer keep quiet and in 1967 shocked the world by defecting to the United States—leaving her two children behind. But although she was never a part of her father's regime, she could not escape his legacy. Her life in America was fractured; she moved frequently, married disastrously, shunned other Russian exiles, and ultimately died in poverty in Wisconsin.

With access to KGB, CIA, and Soviet government archives, as well as the close cooperation of Svetlana's daughter, Rosemary Sullivan pieces together Svetlana's incredible life in a masterful account of unprecedented intimacy. Epic

in scope, it's a revolutionary biography of a woman doomed to be a political prisoner of her father's name. Sullivan explores a complicated character in her broader context without ever losing sight of her powerfully human story, in the process opening a closed, brutal world that continues to fascinate us.

Illustrated with photographs.

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Editorial Review

Review

"[A] measured, informative biography...fascinating...an admiring portrait of an amazingly adaptable person facing all but insurmountable odds...[and who] refused to let her lineage seal her fate." (Janet Maslin, *New York Times* Book Review)

"Riveting.... Throughout, Sullivan treats the wealth of facts she has uncovered with a sensitive, compassionate touch.... Sullivan tells a nuanced story that, while invariably sympathetic, nonetheless allows readers the freedom of their own interpretations." (Olga Grushin, *New York Times* Book Review)

"Compelling.... Sullivan takes us confidently through an eventful life.... It's to Ms. Sullivan's credit that, at least in these pages, Alliluyeva herself is proved...a fascinating person not simply because of her name but because she was a willful, intelligent, passionate woman who resisted being gawked at as a freak of history: the monster's pretty daughter." (*Wall Street Journal*)

"[An] extraordinary book.... Rosemary Sullivan possesses the sensitivity necessary to unlock a beguiling and complex character worthy of admiration, not ridicule.... Superb." (*Washington Post*)

"A child of the Kremlin who as an adult defected to the United States, Svetlana led a strange and often sad life; Sullivan brings deep scholarship and sympathy to her story." (*Boston Globe*, Best Books of 2015)

"A principal virtue of...Sullivan's empathetic *Stalin's Daughter* is the vivid sense it offers of Alliluyeva.... Sullivan does a nice job of conveying her subject's point of view without accepting it as the last word." (*Los Angeles Times*)

"*Stalin's Daughter* is a poignant look at the struggles of a dictator's offspring." (*Christian Science Monitor*)

"[A] magisterial biography." (*O Magazine*)

"Sullivan tells Alliluyeva's story with sympathy and sharp psychological insight.... [It] soars.... It is to Sullivan's credit that she makes the Homeric wanderings of Svetlana Alliluyeva—who died, almost penniless, in 2011—not only comprehensible, but also unforgettably moving." (*Newsday*)

"Sullivan does an admirable job of researching, organizing and contextualizing the events of Alliluyeva's bewildering life.... It is an excellent book, and deserves a wide readership." (*Dallas Morning News*)

"Compassionate and compelling, Sullivan sensitively delivers the intimate, tragic life story of a woman who was Stalin's only daughter in all its strangeness.... This is not a political story but a quest for love in the heart of darkness." (Simon Sebag Montefiore, bestselling author of *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*)

"If it weren't for the pages of scrupulous footnotes and the many interviews Rosemary Sullivan pursued you would be convinced that this was fiction. But it's a true story, thrillingly told in this fast-paced, fascinating biography." (Cokie Roberts, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Founding Mothers*, *Ladies of Liberty*, and *Capital Dames*)

“A detailed, sensitive and...sympathetic account of Alliluyeva’s turbulent and tragic life.” (*San Francisco Chronicle*)

“Although other authors have provided more systematic analysis of the substance and mechanics of Stalin’s terror, Rosemary Sullivan...provides one of the more emotionally draining illustrations of Stalin’s evil.... As Sullivan makes clear, Stalin’s daughter led a full and dramatically tumultuous life.” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*)

“A compelling biography...Sullivan tells [Alliluyeva’s] story with sympathy and verve.” (*Minneapolis Star-Tribune*)

““With a gentle literary touch, [Sullivan] lets readers follow Alliluyeva as she wanders the U.S. and U.K....” (*Los Angeles Magazine*)

“Revealing.... Sullivan’s biography takes us beyond...obvious truth and helps us understand, through Svetlana’s stormy history, the nature of regimes that are as brutal as Stalin’s was.” (*New York Review of Books*)

“...[an] arresting biography.” (*More Magazine*)

“Sullivan draws on previously secret documents and interviews with Svetlana’s American daughter, her friends, and the CIA “handler” who escorted her to the U.S. for riveting accounts of her complicated life.” (*Booklist* (starred review))

“A biography of haunting fascination.... The author has illuminated another challenging, mercurial subject.... The author manages suspense and intrigue at every turn.” (*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review))

“Stalin’s only daughter, lived an almost impossible life at the edges of 20th-century history.... Sullivan masterfully employs interviews, Alliluyeva’s own letters, and the contents of CIA, KGB, and Soviet archives to stitch together a coherent narrative of her fractured life.” (*Publishers Weekly* (starred review))

“Insightful and thoroughly researched.... This excellent and engrossing biography is suitable for anyone interested in Russian history or in Svetlana’s struggle to make a difference in a world that never could separate her from her.” (*Library Journal*)

Praise for *Villa Air-Bel*:“A moving and richly detailed account.” (*Boston Globe*)

“*Villa Air-Bel* is a most welcome book, a triumph of the human spirit” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*)

“With tremendous suspense and emotional pull, Sullivan recounts the little-known story of Varian Fry, the intrepid young American who sheltered [dozens of artists and intellectuals] helping them and hundreds more escape from Vichy France.” (*Vogue*)

“Sullivan brilliantly interweaves personal histories with terrifying tales about flight over mountains to Spain or Switzerland and by sea to Casablanca or Martinique....At the centre is Varian Fry, the quiet American.” (*Sunday Times* (London))

“Rosemary Sullivan’s *Villa Air-Bel* is a marvellous addition to the surging literature on occupied France. Sullivan writes not as a historian-she has little new material-but as a dramatist.Her scene-by-scene evocation of life at the house reads like an updated Chekhov comedy laced with horror.” (*Financial Times*)

“This is a magnificent, complex narrative of courage, folly, and complacency...a beautifully narrated book.”
(Telegraph)

“Gripping...Sullivan captures the tense atmosphere of France as the Germans invaded and the fear and anxiety of the intellectuals, some held in detention camps and some who ignored the danger until it was nearly too late.” (Booklist)

“A moving tale of great sacrifice in tumultuous times.” (Publishers Weekly)

“[Villa Air-Bel] bring[s] to life those committed Americans and Europeans who risked all to help others...A complex tale showing how hope and courage flourish, even in the toxic soil of totalitarianism.” (Kirkus Reviews)

From the Back Cover

Award-winning author Rosemary Sullivan returns with a revelatory biography of Svetlana Alliluyeva, a woman fated to live in the shadow of her father, the notorious Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin.

Born in 1926, Svetlana Alliluyeva spent her youth inside the Kremlin as her father’s power soared along with that of the Soviet Union. Eighty-five years later, she died alone and penniless in rural Wisconsin as Lana Peters. Revealed here for the first time, the many lives of Joseph Stalin’s daughter form a riveting portrait of a woman who fled halfway around the world to escape her birthright.

Svetlana was protected from the mass starvation and murder that her father inflicted upon Soviet citizens, but she was not immune to tragedy. She lost almost everyone she loved, including her mother, who committed suicide, and her father’s merciless purges claimed the lives of aunts and uncles, and her lover, who was exiled to Siberia.

After her father’s death, Svetlana discovered the extent of his cruelty. Balking at the control the Kremlin still exerted over her life, she shocked the world by defecting to the United States at the height of the Cold War—leaving behind two children. However, in America Svetlana found only more heartbreak. For a time, Frank Lloyd Wright’s Taliesin community, overseen by his controversial third wife, Olgivanna, formed a second family for her; Svetlana married Wesley Peters, a member of the inner circle, and they had a child. But Olgivanna manipulated their friendship for financial gain, and the marriage disintegrated. No matter how much distance she put between her past and her present, she could not undo the emotional and psychological damage her father had wrought.

With access to FBI, CIA, and Russian State Archives, and with the close cooperation of Svetlana’s daughter, Rosemary Sullivan has created a masterly biography that is epic in scope yet narrated with remarkable intimacy. *Stalin’s Daughter* deftly places Svetlana in a broader context of time and place, without losing sight of her powerfully human story. In the process, this multifaceted narrative reveals the heart of a brutal world and offers an unprecedented look at its mastermind.

About the Author

Rosemary Sullivan has written poetry, short fiction, biography, literary criticism, reviews, and articles. Her recent books include the critically acclaimed *Villa Air-Bel* and *Labyrinth of Desire*. She is a professor emerita at the University of Toronto and has been awarded Guggenheim, Camargo, and Trudeau Fellowships. She is a recipient of the Lorne Pierce Medal, awarded by the Royal Society of Canada for her contribution to literature and culture, and is an Officer of the Order of Canada.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Arthur Pascual:

This book untitled Stalin's Daughter: The Extraordinary and Tumultuous Life of Svetlana Alliluyeva to be one of several books this best seller in this year, here is because when you read this guide you can get a lot of benefit onto it. You will easily to buy this book in the book store or you can order it by way of online. The publisher on this book sells the e-book too. It makes you quicker to read this book, since you can read this book in your Mobile phone. So there is no reason to you to past this reserve from your list.

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