



## The Jewel of St. Petersburg

*Kate Furnivall*

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## **The Jewel of St. Petersburg** Kate Furnivall

Russia, 1910. Valentina Ivanova is the darling of St. Petersburg's elite aristocracy-until her romance with a Danish engineer creates a terrible scandal and her parents push her into a loveless engagement with a Russian count.

Meanwhile, Russia itself is bound for rebellion. With the Tsar and the Duma at each other's throats, and the Bolsheviks drawing their battle lines, the elegance and opulence of Tsarist rule are in their last days. And Valentina will be forced to make a choice that will change not only her own life, but the lives of those around her forever...

## **The Jewel of St. Petersburg Details**

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Author : Kate Furnivall

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## From Reader Review The Jewel of St. Petersburg for online ebook

### Evelien says

op het randje van te romantisch en stationsroman, maar toch uitgelezen. Met de nodige overgeslagen passages als het wat te melig werd ... ;)

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### Kamilla says

it's ok nothing great or remarkable or as engaging as the russian concubine. There were a lot of disappointments with the story and Valetina's character i also feel like there were some HUGE plot holes.....(spoiler alert) she gets pregnant but her parents still want her to marry another man she hasn't slept with.... it had me scratching my head the entire time I mean that's kinda a no argument at this point and like the other guy would even marry her..... I think that's the thing there was this pathetic subplot that went on far longer than it should have and became pointless and idiotic..... I advice skip it you already know who Valentina ends up with and the BS before it is pointless and doesn't make a very engaging story

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### Aleksandra says

Dragulj Sankt Peterburga se obavezno mora ?itati prije Ruske konkubine i moram priznati da mi je poznavanje onoga što je bilo poslije pokvarilo užitak ?itanja ovog ina?e odli?nog romana. Romansa glavnih likova ?ije uzbudljive avanture ?ine okosnicu romana je jako lijepa i dirljiva, a dramati?na zbivanja u osvit Oktobarske revolucije su veoma vješto do?arana. Volim romane ?ija je radnja smještena u ovaj burni period ruske historije, a ovaj veoma podsje?a na Sašenjku, pa stoga svima onima kojima je sudbina ove prelijepe Ruskinje ostala u srcu, preporu?ujem da upoznaju i ovaj dragulj, lijepu i snalažljivu Valentinu.

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### Jilly says

While I really enjoyed reading the first two books this one was rather disappointing. I knew it would be a prequel to the first book which was mostly about Lydia. We were supposed to learn more about her parents and the hardships they endured while in Russia and when fleeing Russia.

Now if you've read the first book you already know what will happen. You know what I mean when I say this book is misleading. I fully expected the ending to be different and less reassuring and felt mildly disappointed that I was wrong. Now, I'm all for positive endings but being a faithful reader of the series I was disappointed when it felt like Furnivall was deliberately misleading her readers though I supposed things could change quickly when running from a militant regime.

Now, that isn't the only thing I had a problem with. Furnivall isn't always an easy read but she kept my interest in the first two books. This novel seemed drawn out and lost my interest several times. It took me longer to finish this book than the previous ones, with two pit stops to read other things.

Valentina and Katya's relationship is a beautiful thing but it felt a little secondary to the story. Despite Valentina's desire to be a nurse in this book she doesn't strike you as the type in the first book. Her character

seemed far too different from the Valentina we meet in *The Russian Concubine*. I also find that after reading so much of this families story and knowing the outcome has left me bereft. Does Furnivall not do happy endings for anyone?

While the character of Valentina wasn't exactly what I expected, I did enjoy the budding love story between Jens Friis and her. I enjoyed their moments together and Valentina's manipulation of her overbearing and unreasonable father. I also enjoyed that Valentina wasn't content to be a society woman and wanted to do more with her life. I would have to say, though, that it was hard to reconcile both Jens and Valentina with their future counterparts.

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### **Rosanne Lortz says**

In the years leading up to the Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks agitate for change causing unrest throughout all of Russia. Valentina Ivanovna, a young Russian noblewoman, experiences their violence when a bomb blows up her father's study permanently injuring her younger sister Katya. Consumed by an unwarranted guilt for this event, Valentina determines to devote the rest of her life to her sister's wellbeing.

Valentina, like many other aristocratic ladies, has been brought up to marry well and bring honor to her family. Her small white hands are trained to play the piano, not for heavy labor. When she announces to her parents that she would like to become a nurse, they are shocked and forbid such a step. Instead, they attempt to force her into a marriage with an eligible Colonel of the Hussar regiment. What her family doesn't know is that she has fallen in love with Jens Friis, a Danish engineer designing new sewer systems to improve the quality of life in St. Petersburg. Valentina and Jens begin a clandestine love affair in a world that is rapidly falling apart.

Meanwhile, the Bolsheviks' violence and acts of terrorism are increasing daily. Unbeknownst to them, Valentina's family has been employing a chauffeur who is not just a Bolshevik sympathizer but also the mastermind behind several bombings in St. Petersburg. The dangers increase dramatically until Valentina finds herself in the middle of a revolution that will overthrow her family, the tsar, and all of her hopes and dreams.

This book started out excellently. The prose was well-written and the characters were engaging. As Valentina and Jens' love affair progressed, however, I found myself caring a little bit less about them. Explicit sex scenes lent a tawdriness to the tale, and the Bolshevik villains, such as the chauffeur, became less believable as the story wore on.

All in all, this book was an interesting picture of aristocratic life in Russia on the cusp of revolution. Although I felt that this story had some failings, I was impressed enough with Furnivall's writing and research to want to read more of her novels.

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### **Elizabeth says**

Pre-revolutionary Russia. Opulent balls, elegant palace-mansions, the increasing polarity between class divisions, and lingering behind it all the growing promise of an uprising against Tsarist autocracy. The ingredients are all laid out for the perfect historical romance. Certainly, when I received this as a present for Christmas I was ready to devour it whole. And yet, I found *The Jewel of St. Petersburg* a bit ho-hum at the end of the day. Not that I disliked it, but it seemed so... ordinary. I have no other word to describe it. I am

thoroughly disappointed.

The main characters, Valentina Ivanova and Jens Friis, are not unlikeable, but I just couldn't connect with them at all, try as I might. The secondary and even peripheral characters were far more intriguing than either the protagonist or her Danish lover. I kept wanting to read more about Valentina's sister, Katya, who is left crippled after Bolshevik revolutionaries detonate a bomb outside the Ivanov summer home in Tesovo. I wanted to know more about how she was dealing with her paralysis, especially after you read about how she tries to commit suicide. I found Live Popkov another very interesting character, one whom I felt the author could have spent more time developing. Others, too, like Doktor Fedorin, Varenka, and Father Morozov, would have sparked my interest much more. Instead, the bulk of the story is focused on Valentina and Jens, both of whom seemed too perfect to be true. They seemed too contrived, too perfect as individuals. This would not be so bad, normally, if I did not find their love affair so linear. It seems just all too seamless, to the point of absurdity. In the blink of an eye they are suddenly together, and I actually had to go back a few pages to see did I somehow accidentally skip a chapter. On the whole, their relationship seemed too easy, maybe even boring? There isn't even a real valid reason for them not to be together in the book when we later learn that Valentina's parents want her to marry for money. Jens Friis is clearly well-off, not to mention of very high standing considering he is Tsar Nicholas's Royal Engineer in charge of the city's waterworks and sewage systems. This is even addressed in the book itself, although rather lamely. I kept thinking towards the latter end of the novel: how much more exciting and unusual this book would have been if Valentina had fallen in love with a revolutionary like Arkin, or hell, even a stablehand like Liev Popkov?

Furnivall writes very beautifully when she wants to, but I have to agree with some of the readers here when I say that there are moments when the prose becomes stale, like the author is writing a historical account rather than a novel. Even the more artistically crafted sentences sound hackneyed - some of it is lovely, in a guilty pleasures sort of way, while the rest of it would make even the most inveterate romance readers roll their eyes or squirm with distaste.

By the end of the novel I felt emotionally burnt out, the climax of the story coming much too late and not amounting to very much, either. The last page, frankly, bordered on the ridiculous, and makes me doubt very much about whether I'm going to go ahead and complete the trilogy. A shaky 2.5/5.

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## **Jennifer Rayment says**

### The Good Stuff

- \* Exciting opening chapter, grabs your attention and makes you want to keep reading
- \* Descriptions of the scenery are breathtakingly written, you feel you could reach out and touch the landscape
- \* Epic story up there with *Gone with the Wind*, *The Thorn Birds*, etc. If this isn't made into a movie I will be totally surprised
- \* Couldn't put the book down and now I am dying to get my hands on a copy of *The Russian Concubine*
- \* Realistic characters dealing with horrendous choices and struggling in a changing world
- \* Author really lets you see both sides of the revolution with very little sympathy or judgment for either side

### The Not so Good Stuff

- \* A little dry in spots, but not overly so
- \* After exciting first 2 chapters, it dies a little and takes a little while to get going again. Don't give up though, it really does grab you again

## Favorite Quotes/Passages

"It was something by Chopin, one of his least favorite composers, always so plaintive, so full of despair, whining in your ear like a cat in heat."

"The truth of what a person believed and the truth of what they said were two different things. There was no hard-and fast line to draw under it because it shifted between shadows and sunlight."

"What kind of justice was that? What kind of equality, the weak devoured by the strong?"

## What I Learned

- \* A lot about Russian history
- \* About both sides of revolution
- \* War is hell and no one ever wins -- well I already knew that -- why the hell can't anyone learn from history

## Who should/shouldn't read

- \* Lovers of historical fiction, especially early 1900 Russian history will enjoy
- \* Lovers of epic emotionally rich stories will also love
- \* Trying to think of who wouldn't like this kind of story, probably those who need non stop action might be disappointed

## 4.5 Deweys

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## Mai Laakso says

Kaikille romantiikan nälkäisille Walesissa syntynyt Kate Furnivall on kirjoittanut kirjan Pietarin jalokivi, joka sijoittuu Pietariin vuodesta 1910 vuoteen 1917. Kirjan tarinaan on upotettu jännittävällä tavalla Venäjän tsaarin viimeiset vuodet ja tuotu esille taustoja, mitkä vaikuttivat tsaarin perheen lopulliseen tuhoon. Kansa kärsi nälkää ja sortoa, mutta aateliset elivät yltäkylläisyydessä. Köyhillä ei ollut mitään oikeuksia.

Kirjan päähenkilö on nuori Valentina Ivanova, joka nousee Pietarin aateliston lemmiksi, Pietarin jalokiveksi, vaikka ei sitä tahdo. Valentina tahtoo sairaanhoitajaksi, sillä hän haluaa hoitaa pommi-iskussa vammautunutta siskoaan. Tie sairaanhoitajaksi ei ole helppo, sillä sitä vastustavat vanhemmat ja sairaaloiden johtajat. He kuvittelevat, että aatelistiperheen tyttärestä ei ole kovaan työhön. Valentina on päättäväinen ja yllättää kaikki.

Vaaroja ja pelottavia tilanteita joka käänteissä, aika on tulenarkaa ja aateliset ja poliitikot ovat tiensä päässä. Upea lukupaketti.

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## Sandra Olshaski says

The Jewel of St. Petersburg by Kate Furnivall (Rated: P: mild, S)  
Berkley Publishing Group  
ISBN: 978-0-425-23423-5  
Published: August 7, 2010  
Trade Paperback, 410 pages

I can rarely resist a book that either contains the name St. Petersburg in the title or promises a good tale with that city as its backdrop. I wasn't disappointed as Kate Furnivall wove a tale of intrigue, treachery, loyalty, rebellion and love in pre-revolution Russia.

It is 1910 and Tsar Nicholas Romanov sits on the throne and as the narrative states, "he was the wrong man at the wrong time." Weak, indecisive, oblivious to the plight of his people, his primary interest in life is his wife, the Tsarina, his 4 daughters and the heir to the throne, Alexei. While ordinary Russians are starving, he, his family, and most of the aristocrats live in opulent surroundings, including the heroine of the story, Valentina Ivanova. She charms the high society of St. Petersburg with both her beauty and her talent for piano. However, to her credit, Valentina wants desperately to be useful, not just spending her days drinking tea, shopping for new dresses and going to balls. Above all, she wants to take care of her younger sister, Katya, who was injured when a bomb exploded at their home. The bomb attack was orchestrated by the Bolsheviks who were against all aristocrats. To enable her to care for her sister, Valentina becomes a nurse, much to the dismay of her overbearing father and delicate, elegant mother. Moreover, Valentina is expected to make a "good" marriage to a wealthy fellow Russian, a soldier in the Tsar's army. Enter middle-class, Danish engineer, Jens Friis. Sparks begin to fly, not only between him and Valentina, but also between Stepan Chernov, the man her parents want her to marry. All of this happens as Russian peasants experience food shortages, rising prices, bitter resentment against the Tsar and growing revolutionary fervor.

The author uses excellent descriptions throughout the book. For instance, early on in the story, just after the bomb attack at Valentina's home, the author writes, "the smoke was pouring out, swallowing the house in greedy gulps." Referring to the wealthy, "Russians love to display their wealth as ostentatiously as peacocks unfurl their gaudy tails." Referring to a fireplace, the author says "the fire muttered like an old man in the corner." Furnivall uses such rich descriptive words that not only do we marvel at her ability, but these descriptions make the reader feel part of the scenes.

There is good character development of the main protagonists. We see Valentina grow in sympathy and understanding of the poor, prompting her to work on their behalf; we like the personality of Jens as he fights for Valentina's love and shows his concern for the Russian people; we dislike Stepan's uncaring attitude toward human life as he kills innocent Russians in the name of the Tsar. The reader is held in suspense to the end of the novel – will they all survive as rebellion and revolution swirl around them?

There are some expletives as well as 2 sexual scenes, but these are neither explicit nor unsavory.

This book kept me enthralled from the first sentence to the last. I recommend it for people who enjoy historical fiction set in the time of the ill-fated Romanovs.

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### **Amy Lignor says**

Historical fiction at its finest (and I am not over exaggerating). Not since Pam Jenoff's, *The Kommandant's*

Girl, have I literally felt pulled back through time because of the fantastic storytelling of a truly brilliant author. Not only that, but as a true fan of Tsar Nicholas II, Alexandra, Rasputin, and that whole time period, this could not have dropped into the lap of a better reviewer.

We begin our story with young Valentina Ivanova. Now Valentina is a much beloved character already; she debuted in Ms. Furnivall's first novel, *The Russian Concubine* as the beloved mother of Lydia Ivanova. But here, we get to go back to the very beginning of Valentina's life; the time and place where she became the strong, classy, elegant heroine she turned out to be.

She's seventeen when we begin this story, living on her father's estate located in Tesovo, Russia in 1910. Her father is a General – a much beloved and trusted minister to Tsar Nicholas II, so she – as well as her family – are looked at by the Russian commoners and hard workers as the enemy in their midst. The Bolshevik's are readying for their Revolution and they can't wait to throw these wealthy, illustrious families off their thrones.

Valentina had woken this morning, gotten on her horse, and raced into the woods bordering the estate. Unfortunately, what she sees in the darkness of the mighty trees are men in black hoods, hunters who are there to make sure her father is one of the first to lose his life. They attack Valentina and try with all their might to capture her but she escapes and literally bumps into Liev – the son of her father's stable master. Off they rush back to the estate, hoping that they can stop the killers and save her family. But just as the house comes into view, a wing is blown to smithereens – the wing that is home to her father's study. Valentina rushes to the house and finds that it was her young sister Katya who is harmed; the poor girl had woken up and was searching the big window to try and locate her missing sister. The guilt is so immense that Valentina swears upon everyone's soul that she will protect poor Katya for the rest of her life and make sure that she has a chance to walk again.

Time passes and the reader is brought to Valentina's school, where she sits and plays piano during a recital for the Tsar, himself. During the performance, however, a man that she's only seen once before in her life – a man who she fell in love with – appears in the performance hall. His name is Jens Friis, and he is a man who wants nothing more than to help the workers in St. Petersburg get more money and better living conditions, even though he is counted among their enemies. What he also wants more than anything is the beautiful Valentina's heart, who survives on the fire of vengeance and anger churning in her soul.

Jens and Valentina make the most unlikely couple – she being part of the wealthy aristocracy and he being a Danish engineer who doesn't seem to know who to help. Unfortunately, although Valentina's heart belongs to the Dane with fiery red hair and green eyes, her society parents push her into a loveless marriage with a ruthless Russian Count in order to make sure she "mixes" with her own kind of society. Meanwhile, with everything else that is going on in her own life, Valentina can feel the anger flowing through the streets while the Tsar and the Duma walk down the road to war.

With everything from the beautiful scenery and landmarks of St. Petersburg, to the well-written heroine who faced down everything from pain and loss to brutality and political upheaval, there wasn't a dull moment on any page of this book. Delving into the Russian world during that time period is always an extremely interesting experience – watching the downfall of the Tsar and the uprising of the people from Valentina's perspective was a whole new take on the strange and frightening world back then. Not only that, but the love story will hit you to your very core.

The Jewel of St. Petersburg could not be more appropriately named, because it is most certainly a jewel to me. From the locations to the characters, this walk through history is like a movie that you will never want to end. This time period held so many adventures for Valentina, that it was an absolute joy for a reader who'd already fallen in love with her in *The Russian Concubine* to see how it all began.

## Silver says

I really enjoyed Furnivall's *The Russian Concubine* so I was quite looking forward to reading the other books in the series. I have to say I found this book was not quite as good as *Russian Concubine* was. In part I think it was because of how much I loved the characters from *Russian Concubine* which were not within this story. While it was interesting seeing the background on the life of Valencia, Lydia's mother, to try and better understand her character within the *Russian Concubine*.

I will say one of the reasons I did not enjoy this book as much is because I felt this book focused more on the romance part of the story, and for a large portion of it I did not feel as if very much was actually happening within the story. It was a bit slow moving. Though towards the end it did pick up more and start to become more interesting.

One of the things which I did rather enjoy about this book is the way in which it portrayed the rebellion within Russia and the uprising of the people. I liked the way in which you were able to see things from both points of view and see the flaws and wrong doings on both sides. On the one hand you can see how the people suffered, and the corruption and understand what moved them to such violent and extreme action and on the other hand you can see the innocent people who were harmed because of their actions, and the way in which the innocent were punished for the faults of the guilty.

The characters were complicated and often both sympathetic and dislikable at the same time. They had many different sides of them which motivated their actions, and they struggled with complex feelings that created inner conflicts within them.

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## Amy Bruno says

Author Kate Furnivall has written an utterly engrossing story of Valentina Ivanova, a daughter to the finance minister to Tsar Nicholas II, set in St. Petersburg during a time of great civil unrest in Russia's history. The working class and poor are getting more desperate every day as they fight starvation and disease or get injured, maimed or killed at the un-safe factories they are forced to work in while the upper class grow more rich and spend more extravagantly. The Revolutionaries are killing off government officials left and right and Valentina's father is among the targets.

Valentina, though born in the upper class, is more interested in taking care of people than of dresses and parties and dreams of one day becoming a nurse. She is a bright, strong-willed girl whom I liked immediately and the rest of the characters were just as engaging - the endearing engineer, Jens; Arkin, the Revolutionary with a heart, Valentina's sad mother Elizaveta and her unfortunate sister Katya. With exceptional descriptions of 20th century St. Petersburg, from the opulent homes of the Russian nobility to the squalid homes of the working class and the underground tunnels beneath the city, Furnivall draws the reader in and the fast-paced action keeps you flipping the pages quickly to see what happens next.

Having thoroughly enjoyed my first book by Kate Furnivall, I am now on a mission to own them all! If you like your historical fiction exciting, enthralling and unputdownable, then this is the book for you!

Valentina's story doesn't end here, check out *The Russian Concubine*, which is the sequel to *The Jewel of St. Petersburg* and tells the story of Valentina's daughter.

## Iliada says

This book is a prequel even though it was published after the other two books in the series. If you read this one first, as happened with me, it's a five star! If you're reading it after the other two books in the series, I'm not sure it's worth it. This book was really good but I find that the heroine, Lydia's mother, is really changed for the worst in the first book of the series (second in a chronological order), so you end up hating her, or believing it's not the same person. However, I'm trying to be impartial and treat this book separately than the rest so I'm giving it five stars. I'm sure though that if that was the last one I read I would give it less because: 1. I wouldn't care for the heroine, since I hated her in the other book, though I liked her in this one, and 2. I would already know what happened in the end. So, I'm really confused about this one! I loved it the first time I read it but wished I had never done so when I was through with the series because it just made me so sad. (view spoiler). It's your choice if you read this one, but be prepared to be really disappointed later.

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## Kristy says

run-of-the-mill: not outstanding in quality or rarity.

This book hits the mark of mediocracy. It has it's enduring moments, yes, but on the whole it's not amazing.

Set in Russia, the year is 1910. The Russian people are rallying. They want a better life, they want Czar Nicholas and all the Romanovs gone. Valentina has lived a life of supposed luxury. From the outside looking in, she appears to be just another aristocrat living the high life. Little does the outside world know, she is looking after her paralyzed sister, she is thinking for her own self, she is becoming a nurse, she is in love. She meets her Jens by chance, playing the piano for the Czar. He unnerves her. They pretty much fall for each other from the start, only Valentina's father has plans for her. Plans to marry a captain to get him out of his enormous debt. In a time of war, can Valentina chose love?

This book had a wonderful story in it. It had much more depth than I had originally thought it would. There is something about the way the author writes that I'm just not crazy about. It's almost like she writes too factually, instead of telling the story.....

3.5 stars

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## Marcie says

I know I say this a lot, but I really liked this book. My favorite part of the book was the setting. I love that it was set in Russia during the revolution. There was so much turmoil and unrest during this time that it definitely added a raw grittiness to the story. There were a lot of characters in this book, but not so many that you lose track. The story focuses on Valentina. She is from the aristocratic society whose path is already predetermined. Valentina decides to buck the system and make her own destiny. I really liked the strength of her character. She was willing to do what ever it took to save everyone she loved. Speaking of love, let's talk about the romantic aspect of this book. Valentina is expected to marry well, but she falls in love with a engineer, Jens Friis. Her heart belongs to him from the first moment she sees him, but she longs to please her parents also. This is an interesting relationship full of many complications. I enjoyed this aspect as well. The story line was very compelling and it kept me interested to the last sentence.

## **Toni Osborne says**

The novel transports us back to a time preceding the Russian Revolution of 1917. Set against a background of elegance and opulence this dramatic story is of love, courage, revenge and heartache.

The heroine is Valentina Ivanova, daughter of a minister under Tsar Nicholas also a young pianist and the darling of St. Petersburg's wealthy aristocracy. Valentina's only dream is to become a nurse and take care of her sister, who was maimed for life during a Bolshevik attack on the family estate. Her father has other expectations, marrying a Russian count would solidify their place amongst the country's elite. But strong headed Valentina, determine in her own way, graduates from nursing and eventually falls in love with Jens Friss, a Danish engineer.....A life changing decision with many consequences.

This is a harsh and scary time, the Tsar, the Duma and the Bolsheviks are at each other's throats.....A revolution is in the making, the days of the ruling aristocracy are numbered and no one is safe.

Following Valentina we are plunged into two contrasting worlds, one of the miserably poor and the other of the extreme rich. This sweeping story highlights to what means desperate people pushed to the limit will go to obtain recognition and the basics of life they need to survive. The characterization is well done, realistic and very gripping. This compelling tale draws its readers into a fast-paced and captivating historical-fiction with graphic details of the period.

I enjoyed previous novels of Ms Furnivall and this one did not disappoint. I can say I am a fan.

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## **Tina says**

I really wanted to like this book. I love historical fiction and was very excited to read a book set during the Russian Revolution. That being said, this book fell flat in a lot of areas. The characters were empty shells. I found myself only really caring about the secondary characters. Actually, just one: Liev. And perhaps the doctor's daughter, who makes only cameo appearances. Jens and Valentina? Not so much. I didn't dislike either of them; they were just too good, too flawless. Valentina plays the piano. Valentina sacrifices herself for her sister. She's beautiful and is from an affluent family. All of this would be fine, except that Jens seemed to love her for completely unbelievable reasons. Oh a bomb went off in a tunnel? Valentina heard it, when few others did. Jens thinks at this point: "Such sharp ears. She was alert, she listened. Most people didn't listen." We're constantly told how much they love each other, how much they need each other. But aside from their desperation, I never really saw why these two people should be together.

I felt like I was going in circles when I was reading this book. I found myself clinging to the minor characters or the occasional prettily woven phrase to keep me from giving up on it. Around page 300, I decided I was sick of this soap opera and despite the fact that there's less than a hundred pages left, I had no desire to continue reading it. I've put it on my pile of books to donate; hopefully someone else will enjoy it more than I did.

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### **Tom Heeren says**

Two lovers on different levels: Jens Friis on the democratic level of making Russia a constitutional monarchy like Great Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Luxembourg, Belgium and Norway. Ankins on the Communist level. Valentina Invinova faced many challenges such as avoiding an arranged marriage to a Imperial Russian colonel who would save her father from being forced to accept debt and pay banks, Jewish moneylenders and the like, taking a job as a nurse to show her traditional father she can take care of her own.

My opinion is that the Russian Revolution was the reason why Valentina understood the challenge of dealing with a rapidly changing Russia during the Great War.

Grade: A +

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### **Ken says**

An absorbing yarn set in St Petersburg in the years years leading up to the Revolution.

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### **Josephine says**

3 stars.

The Jewel of St. Petersburg was okay. It was not incredible, nor was it awful. There were plot elements that I felt were unnecessary and nonsensical which took away from what it could have been. Also, this was a very character driven book, but with characters that I did not connect with enough for it to be enjoyable as the centre of the novel.

In one word, this book was 'meh'.

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