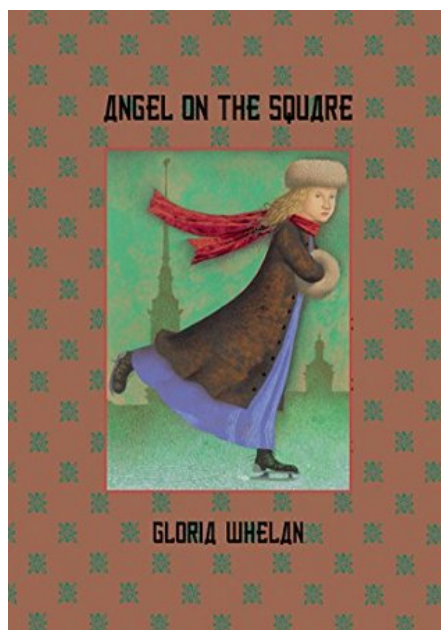




Angel on the Square

Gloria Whelan

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In the fall of 1914, safe behind palace walls, Katya Ivanova sees St. Petersburg as a magical place.

The daughter of a lady-in-waiting to the Empress, Katya spends all her time with the Grand Duchesses; the royal family feels like her own. But outside the palace, a terrible war is sweeping through Europe, and Russia is beginning to crumble under the weight of a growing revolution. Now, as Katya's once-certain future begins to dissolve, she must seek to understand what is happening to her beloved country and, for the first time in her life, take charge of her own destiny.

Angel on the Square Details

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From Reader Review Angel on the Square for online ebook

Georgia Herod says

This is the first Whelan book I read--and I loved it. I enjoy young adult fiction. In this book and all others I've read--she creates strong female protagonists who overcome great adversity. They are dynamic, growing from beginning to end. Another feature of Whelan's writing is authenticity regarding setting, time frame, history, and culture. One aspect of the last which I very much enjoy is her use of words in the language of the land (for example, in this, as well as the successive books about Russia near the Revolution, she chooses Russian words on occasion). Any of Whelan's books would provide strong role models for older girls. They'd be great "read alouds" too.

Nora says

I read this for a project for school. Simple but sweet, Angel on the Square allowed us to explore a kind of time period I feel like isn't appreciated enough. Everyone talks about the Holocaust, the American Revolution (though I do agree both of those time periods are interesting), etc., but not many may know about the Russian Revolution in this time. My one problem with the book was I felt like most of the book was just Katya and the Tsar's family hiding and hiding and hiding...BUT it doesn't mean that wasn't interesting. However, if you don't like those kinds of books, I would recommend not reading it. Here were the best parts of the book:

- A once prim and proper girl learning to survive.
 - Katya's relationship with the Tsar's family, esp. Stana (aka Anastasia).
 - Katya and Misha's relationship.
-

Kate Matson says

Summary from Goodreads:

In the fall of 1914, safe behind palace walls, Katya Ivanova sees St. Petersburg as a magical place. The daughter of a lady-in-waiting to the Empress, Katya spends all her time with the Grand Duchesses; the royal family feels like her own. But outside the palace, a terrible war is sweeping through Europe, and Russia is beginning to crumble under the weight of a growing revolution. Now, as Katya's once-certain future begins to dissolve, she must seek to understand what is happening to her beloved country and, for the first time in her life, take charge of her own destiny.

Plot:

Honestly, the overall plot was fairly boring. I found myself skimming at many parts. I do, however, like all the information on the Romanov family. This is my first book that I've read about them, and it was mildly interesting. Obviously not interesting enough to keep me from skimming. There's really not much to say about this plot, besides the fact that it really didn't keep my attention. The ending was predictable, and even though this book was boring, it was still sorta fun. That's why I rated it 3/5 stars.

Characters:

The characters didn't really have any depth to them, given that this is a children's book. I just don't even know what to say. I guess it was pretty interesting to read about Anastasia (I LOVE THE MOVIE), and it was fascinating to see how the family functioned. It was also really cool to read about Rasputin, and his creepy manor.

Overall & Recommendations:

I could've done without this book, even though it was mildly fun. The characters were dull, but it was interesting to read about the Romanov family. I can't say I recommend this book to middle graders. I do think it would be a fun read for children, though.

Quotes I liked:

"It is hard to give up what you know for what you don't know."

"I thought I understood what was best. I knew too little and believed too soon."

Hailey Hudson says

One of my longtime favorites.

Richelle says

I picked this book up because I really liked Homeless Bird, another book by the same author. This is a junior historical fiction book set in Russia during the time of the revolution. The main character, Katya, is born into an aristocratic family and is fiercely loyal to the Romanov family. Her opinion of them begins to be torn as she has opportunities to see how the majority of the Russian citizens live. Even though I know the main historical events of this period, the fictional characters' lives made the book really interesting. It made it so even though I knew how things were going to turn out for Russia and the Romanovs, I wanted to keep reading because I didn't know what was going to happen to Katya. The book did a really good job of covering WWI from a Russian aristocratic perspective, who Rasputin was, the Bolshevik revolution and rise of Lenin, as well as the final fate of the Romanovs. I really wanted the book to mention the Amber Room somewhere, but it never did. I just have a thing for the Amber Room lately, but I guess I'll have to go find another book about that if I want to read more about it. I think this book is probably great for 4th-5th grade and up.

Richard (Rick) says

My family really likes Whelan's other book, "Homeless Bird." This one wasn't as good as Homeless Bird, but was still enjoyable. It's about an aristocrat girl and friend of the royal family whose life changes during the Russian overthrow of the royal family. My 8-year-old daughter loved it. It's appropriate for all ages, although maybe a little unsettling or sad for sensitive young readers.

Jenny says

My kids and I recently read, Angel On The Square, for my daughters' book group. Katya, a young Russian aristocrat, and her cousin Misha both lost their fathers during the last war. While Katya and her mother Irena are loyal to the Czar, Misha supports the revolutionary leader, Alexander Kerensky. Misha takes Katya out among the peasants and for the first time she sees the poverty and degradation in which they live.

Eventually, Irena sends Misha to the military academy due to his involvement with the revolutionaries. When the Empress asks Irena to become her lady-in-waiting, Irena and Katya move to the Alexander Palace to live with the royal family. Katya becomes close to the Grand Duchesses and looks upon the Czar as a father. But she still cannot reconcile the exploitation she saw among the peasants.

When World War I breaks out with Germany, Misha's class at the military academy is graduated early and he is sent into battle. The war is a disaster and Russia suffers many losses. The Czar goes to the battle front and leaves the Empress to rule Russia. After several years at war, the civil unrest escalates. The peasants, unhappy with the war and the Empress's rule, are ready for revolution. The Czar abdicates the throne hoping to save Russia and Kerensky heads the Russian government. For several months the royal family, along with Katya and Irena, live under house arrest until they are eventually sent to Siberia. In Siberia, still under house arrest, they find out that Kerensky's revolutionary government has been overthrown by the Bolsheviks and Lenin now heads the government. The royal family is taken away and Katya and Irena are not allowed to stay.

Katya and her mother cannot return to St. Petersburg due to the danger all aristocrats are under so they go to their country estate, The Oaks. They arrive only to find the estate has been burned by the peasants who worked their land. They are taken in by a peasant couple and Katya begins learning how to farm the land. Katya and her mother begin their new lives as peasants and are soon reunited with Misha.

The kids and I really enjoyed this book. After finishing it, my daughter bemoaned the sad ending. We were able to discuss the history behind the book and how the author had to end with the death of the royal family because Lenin really did have them killed. This book gave us some meaty discussion topics: divine right of kings, revolution, strikes, riots, Russia, monarchy, aristocracy, peasants, georgics, WWI, and Communism. We also discussed the difference between the American Revolution, the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution and why each ended differently. Angel On The Square also inspired us to do some of our own research to learn more about Rasputin, the Empress's adviser, the death of the royal family, and the Bolshevik Revolution.

M Laabs says

I was interested in this book, because I wanted to hear a more factual story about Tsar Nicholas II's Imperial family after seeing a movie about Anastasia. We listened to the audio book. The movie was terrible, it warped all historical facts about Anastasia--but this book, a historical fiction was very well done. I thoroughly enjoyed it, as well as my sixth graders. We looked up, historical pictures of the family and St. Petersburg, Russia. I know it will definitely set up my boys to understanding the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia when they study it in their later years. We continued the Russian Saga with "The Impossible Journey" immediately.

Devon says

This book was something different, kind of a treat for me, because it's about World War I – not my comfort zone – but also about Russia, which is something I've been interested in lately.

It's meant for children, as per usual, but the shallowness of this book was not a problem for me, really. I felt like the length was suitable for the story. I would've liked a little more of a follow up – checking in on

Misha, especially, because he was so important to Katya, and, thus, to you as the reader. But I like the way it ended, overall.

I really love the conflict between whether or not the Tsar & Empress were good or bad people – in the right or in the wrong.

Megan Hillard says

"Angel on the Square" is an incredibly good book. It takes place in 1913-1918, and Katya Ivanovna is a 13 year old girl who is the daughter of an aristocrat. Her life changes when her mother is accepted as a Lady-in-Waiting to the Empress of Russia, Tsarina Alexandra. Katya and her mother move into the palace with the Imperial Family, which consists of Tsar Nicholas II, Tsarina Alexandra, Grand Duchess Olga, Grand Duchess Tatiana, Grand Duchess Maria, Grand Duchess Anastasia, and Tsarevich Alexei. Katya and Anastasia "Stana" become fast friends, and they go through the pre-war years, early war, revolution, house arrest, and Tobolsk together, but they are separated in Ekaterinburg. When news reaches Katya that the Imperial Family has been executed, Katya is heartbroken.

All in all, a very good read.

Ciarra fields says

I'm not really far into my book yet i think it is a pretty good book so far. Well my book is about emporers and rulers of kingdoms and i dont really thgink it goes into a lot of detail about some of the characters but other than that itg is an awesome book. I would oly suggest it to people who dont like detail because it doesnt have much in it. Also, if you like kingdoms/palaces and snobby annoying people to go along with it than this is the perfect book for you.

Linda Lipko says

Continuing my journey to study Russian history, I found this book on one of my shelves and spent a pleasant rainy day reading this well written historical novel.

Combining fact with fiction, Angel on the Square is wonderful for many reasons, primarily because it does just what historical fiction should do, ie it opens the door to a glimpse of history and wets the appetite to search for more knowledge about the subject.

Twelve year old Katya Ivanova lived a life of splendor behind gilded palace walls. Her life was secluded and sheltered. When her mother becomes the lady-in-waiting to Empress Alexandra life drastically changes and through Katya's eyes we witness the growing tension in Russia as the Tsar suppresses the masses, embraces WWI and through sheer ineptitude ushers in the downfall of a culture and country rich in tradition.

As she continues a life of luxury, through her young, naive revolutionary friend Misha, she becomes aware of the plight of the masses of poor, starving and increasingly dissatisfied pheasants.

Through Katya's eyes we witness a country crumbling as the rich become the enemies and the poor are used

as pawns in the hands of the revolutionaries and Lenin.

This book presents a well balanced depiction of the evils of a monarchy out of touch with the unrest of the masses while also showing the madness of a brutal group who portray themselves as wanting the best for the people while ruthlessly using and then discarding those they claim to represent.

Angel on the Square is more than a YA coming of age book, it is complex, intricate and multifaceted.

Recommended!

Rebecca says

Wealthy, twelve-year-old Katya Ivanova and her mother have always lived a luxurious life in their mansion in the city of St. Petersburg, Russia. They spend their summers on their country estate, The Oaks, and Katya's mother is a close friend of Empress Alexandra. When the Empress invites Katya's mother to come live in the palace as a lady-in-waiting and to bring Katya along to be a companion to her youngest daughter, Anastasia, Katya is thrilled. She and Anastasia, or Stana as she is called, become close friends. Katya even gets to accompany the royal family on their elegant yacht. But as the years go by, the world is engulfed by a terrible war. Defeat after defeat lowers the morale of the Russian soldiers, and soon the people are rebelling. Even though she has seen firsthand the poverty that many people live in, the royal family has become a second family to Katya. As revolution changes her once predictable life, Katya must change, too, if she is to survive what is to come.

Angel on the Square is one of my favorite books by Gloria Whelan. Over the course of the story, which takes place over several Katya changes from a spoiled little girl to a mature young woman with a greater awareness of the world around her. One of my favorite historical fiction reads years ago and I would definitely still recommend it.

Magda says

I started with the second book in the series, but very much enjoyed this first book. I think any of the three I have read so far can be read as a stand-alone, but they are so good you naturally want to read all of them.

Ina says

Angel on the Square is one of my absolute favorite books. It's an easy read, seemingly not much depth, and not really a tearjerker or focused on hot guys or the destruction of the world...but rather it's a middle grade book set in one of my favorite time periods, the Russian Revolution and the events leading up to it.

Katya is the typical poor little rich girl, and you know, even if it's just a book for the younger ages, her character development doesn't feel like moral judgment at all. It isn't some kind of lesson to be passed on: "be nice to the poor! Treat others with respect! Fear is not a good way of gaining loyalty!" But you get the lessons all the same. I mean, I guess the Russian Revolution was a lesson in and of itself, so there's that. But *still*. I felt that I learned as Katya learned and matured.

The lovely descriptions of the house and the luxuries (her mother's jewelry, I want those sapphires), the Faberge eggs, the delicious food, the ballroom. I love for details of royal living, so Whelan made a fan of me when she went through all this.

The Tsar is not a cruel man, but he does not understand how to rule a country. Alexandra is not a bad person and only a loving, terrified mother, but she does not understand politics. The children don't get it either. Yet they aren't bad people. No one taught them though that to govern a country, you must maintain some semblance of equality. But ah, I suppose that wasn't in fashion then. Who could expect a ruler to give up what he believes is his divine right to a country, to a palace, to a rich life?

Katya learns that the revolution isn't all bad. Misha humanizes the revolutionaries for her. She must mature quickly during these troubling times because the tide is turning in Russia. Yet, while she doesn't want Misha hurt, she cares about Anastasia and the Tsar's family. This is a difficult dilemma for a young girl, to reconcile her friend's beliefs with what she has known all her life.

I liked the hopeful ending. Having Katya create that little house for her mother was beautiful. She is a survivor. Even if she is no longer nobility after the revolution, even though she eats simple meals instead of beautiful meals cooked by servants, life will go on. I like her and Misha together too. :)
