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Anna of All the Russias

A LIFE OF ANNA AKHMATOVA

by Elaine Feinstein



“A window to a dazzling lost age.

“A thoroughly engaging biography of the gloriously knotty Russian poet. Akhmatova emerges here as romantically capricious yet deeply pious, fiercely dedicated to her craft. She was devoted all her life to her kindly, beautiful mother. Her handsome, philandering father disapproved of poetry, so Anna Andreevna Gorenko took Akhmatova as a pen name.

“She believed from an early age that omens portended a remarkable destiny for her. Tall, elegant and thin, she married a wealthy poet, mostly in order to flee the provinces and establish herself in pre-Revolutionary St. Petersburg. Her first volumes established her status at the Stray Dog Café, a legendary hangout for intellectuals and artists. A dizzying number of dire affairs ensued, as well as two more damaging marriages. It all served as fuel for Akhmatova’s creative fire, though the wild euphoria of revolution was followed by the embittering disillusionment of civil war and famine.

“She refused to go into exile even as numerous friends and her sadly neglected son were imprisoned, tortured and worse...but she endured, surviving the revolution and Soviet terror to secure a triumphant legacy. Feinstein’s magisterial translations of Akhmatova’s poetry further enrich this portrait of a mythic personality as vulnerable as she was implacable.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

With 16 pages of illustrations  \$27.50

In May, Everyman’s Library will publish ANNA AKHMATOVA: *Poems*.

Photograph by Moses Nappelbaum, early 1920’s. Courtesy of Stephen Garmey

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