



Twenty Letters to a Friend: A Memoir

By Svetlana Alliluyeva

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In this riveting, *New York Times*-bestselling memoir—first published by Harper in 1967—Svetlana Alliluyeva, subject of Rosemary Sullivan’s critically acclaimed biography, *Stalin’s Daughter*, describes the surreal experience of growing up in the Kremlin in the shadow of her father, Joseph Stalin.

Svetlana Iosifovna Alliluyeva, later known as Lana Peters, was the youngest child and only daughter of Joseph Stalin and Nadezhda Alliluyeva, his second wife. In 1967, she fled the Soviet Union for India, where she approached the U.S. Embassy for asylum. Once there, she showed her CIA handler something remarkable: A personal memoir about growing up inside the Kremlin that she’d written in 1963. The Indian Ambassador to the USSR, whom she’d befriended, had smuggled the manuscript out of the Soviet Union the previous year—and returned it to her as soon as she arrived in India.

Structured as a series of letters to a “friend”—Svetlana refused to identify him, but we now know it was her close friend, Fyodor Volkenstein—this astounding memoir exposes the dark human heart of the Kremlin. After opening with Stalin’s death, Svetlana returns to her childhood. Each letter adds a new strand to her remarkable story; some are wistful—romanticized recollections of her early years and her family—while others are desperate exorcisms of the tragedies that plagued her, such as her mother’s suicide and her father’s increasing cruelty. It is also in some ways a love letter to Russia, with its ancient heritage and spectacularly varied geography.

Candid, surprising, and utterly compelling, *Twenty Letters to a Friend* offers one of the most revealing portraits of life inside Stalin’s inner circle, and of the notorious dictator himself.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Fascinating, revealing, profoundly human, and significant.... The letters move relentlessly on through deepening tragedy, dark happenings, and deaths.” (*Los Angeles Times*, ORIGINAL EDITION)

“Svetlana...has considerable literary talent.” (Elizabeth Hardwick, *New York Review of Books*, ORIGINAL EDITION)

“Compelling reading from first page to last.... To be Stalin’s daughter and to remain human is an admirable accomplishment, and this remarkable book, written with grace and human compassion, is a testimony to a remarkable woman.” (*Houston Post*, ORIGINAL EDITION)

“She is a shrewd observer of character, and her analysis of her father’s psychology...is chillingly convincing.... Has an unexpected power to stir speculation and to evoke a strange but vitally significant era.” (*Baltimore Sun*, ORIGINAL EDITION)

“Fascinating from the first page to the last.... A rich and absorbing memoir.... An illuminating and haunting portrait... Stalin comes vividly to life.... To be Stalin’s daughter and to remain human is itself admirable.” (*New York Times Book Review*, ORIGINAL EDITION)

“It is a testament which, someday, one must hope, Russians will be free to read—and will then be grateful to Svetlana Alliluyeva for the witness she has so courageously and movingly borne.” (Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Atlantic*, ORIGINAL EDITION)

From the Back Cover

In this riveting, *New York Times* bestselling memoir—first published by Harper in 1967—Svetlana Iosifovna Alliluyeva, subject of Rosemary Sullivan’s critically acclaimed biography, *Stalin’s Daughter*, describes the surreal experience of growing up in the Kremlin in the shadow of her father, Joseph Stalin. In 1967, she fled the Soviet Union for India, where she approached the U.S. Embassy for asylum. Once there, she showed her CIA handler something remarkable: a manuscript about her life that she’d written in 1963. The Indian Ambassador to the USSR, whom she’d befriended, had smuggled the manuscript out of the Soviet Union the previous year.

Structured as a series of letters to a “friend”—Svetlana refused to identify him, but we now know it was her close friend, the physicist Fyodor Volkenstein—this astounding memoir, also in some ways a love letter to Russia, with its ancient heritage and spectacularly varied geography, exposes the dark human heart of the Kremlin. Each letter adds a new strand to her story; some are wistful, while others are desperate exorcisms of the tragedies that plagued her life. Candid, surprising, and compelling, *Twenty Letters to a Friend* offers one of the most revealing portraits of life inside Stalin’s inner circle, and of the notorious dictator himself.

About the Author

Svetlana Iosifovna Alliluyeva (1926-2011), later known as Lana Peters, was the youngest child and only daughter of Joseph Stalin and Nadezhda Alliluyeva. In 1967, she defected and became a naturalized citizen of the United States. She returned briefly to the Soviet Union in 1984, but then moved back to the United

States and died in Wisconsin in November 2011.

Users Review

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Ann Bland:

This Twenty Letters to a Friend: A Memoir book is absolutely not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you obtain by reading this book is definitely information inside this e-book incredible fresh, you will get info which is getting deeper you actually read a lot of information you will get. That Twenty Letters to a Friend: A Memoir without we know teach the one who looking at it become critical in imagining and analyzing. Don't possibly be worry Twenty Letters to a Friend: A Memoir can bring once you are and not make your case space or bookshelves' turn out to be full because you can have it within your lovely laptop even phone. This Twenty Letters to a Friend: A Memoir having excellent arrangement in word and layout, so you will not feel uninterested in reading.

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Karolyn Kaufman:

The experience that you get from Twenty Letters to a Friend: A Memoir could be the more deep you looking the information that hide inside words the more you get enthusiastic about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to be aware of but Twenty Letters to a Friend: A Memoir giving you thrill feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in certain way that can be understood by means of anyone who read the item because the author of this publication is well-known enough. This book also makes your personal vocabulary increase well. So it is easy to understand then can go with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We highly recommend you for having this Twenty Letters to a Friend: A Memoir instantly.

Crystal Babin:

Playing with family in the park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with buddies is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try point that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition associated with. Even you love Twenty Letters to a Friend: A Memoir, you can enjoy both. It is great combination right, you still wish to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh can

happen its mind hangout folks. What? Still don't get it, oh come on its identified as reading friends.

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