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My Sergei: A Love Story



Synopsis

The Olympic gold medalist offers a poignant, loving account of her life with her long-time partner and beloved husband, Sergei Grinkov, from their first introduction and successive world pairs skating championships, to their storybook romance and marriage, to the fatal heart attack that took Sergei's life.

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Customer Reviews

In the former Soviet Union, the sports establishment, charged with producing winners for the greater glory of the empire, had almost unlimited power over the athletically gifted. Children as young as five or six were identified, sent to special schools and given rigorous training in the sports in which they were expected to excel. Two such youngsters were Gordeeva and Sergei Grinkov, paired as skaters by their teachers when they were 11 and 14, respectively. Throughout their training and into the start of their competitive careers, each thought of the other only as an athletic partner, partly because the four-year difference in their ages meant they had few friends in common. But as time passed and their joint career led to international championships, they fell in love and married. Their success culminated in Olympic gold medals in 1990 and 1994. And then, suddenly, Grinkov died of a heart attack in 1995 at age 28. The story of their love and their happiness together is deeply moving, and the final chapters are heartrending, while the many photos heighten the tale. First serial to People and Redbook; Literary Guild and Doubleday Book Club alternates; author tour. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Gordeeva and Sergei Grinkov were one of the finest ice skating pairs in the world. Born in Russia, they won European championships, world championships, and gold medals at two Olympics. They married in 1991 and continued to perform after the birth of their daughter. Sergei died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 28 while rehearsing with his wife. Gordeeva here describes their skating and personal life in Russia and the United States in poignant, caring detail. Equally captivating are her descriptions of her childhood, her family, and her life as a champion and professional skater. Unlike recent tell-alls about figure skating (e.g., the Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding spectacle), this biography is not sensational. It simply tells the story of two hard-working, competitive young people who fell in love and whose love ended too soon. For all collections. -?J. Sara Paulk, Coastal Plain Regional Lib., Tifton, Ga. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

It's hard to say more than that. I stumbled upon an old archive article about Katia & Sergei while doing research on heart problems. All of a sudden I remembered their story (TBI in 2011; I've no memory of much before that.) I was quite young at the time, but I was involved in dance, ballet & loved skating. Even as young as I was, I remember just how special their performances were. To read this book now framed their lives, career & love story in a whole new light. When you're a kid, it really was like a real-life fairytale. I'm now approximately the same age as Sergei upon his death. Katia is a natural storyteller. What easily could have been the most boring biography/autobiography ever, instead read as another world coming back to life. Even though you know the inevitable: the ending will always be tragic, Katia perfectly captures youth, young love & ultimately the feeling most of us have in our teens & early 20s. The carefree feeling of invincibility that makes us believe 'bad' things only happen to other people. From their early days in training, to falling in love, this heart felt (and heartbreaking) story is one I highly recommended.

This was such an interesting insight into the world of soviet union and athletes, which is a interesting subject as is, made all the more compelling by the fact it is told by an insider. And beyond that, the personal story of the author is worth reading as well. This was so well written. And while there was most likely a ghost-writer/heavy translation, the story feels very real and genuine. I even went back and watched the performances and some interviews on YouTube after, and like I said, it feels very genuine.

I read this book many years ago. With the Olympics on, while watching skating, I decided to revisit

it. This book is written by Katia, shortly after Sergei passed away at age 28 of heart troubles. It is a fascinating look of how Russia used to be. Katia and Sergei were chosen to be figure skating pairs at age 11 and 14. This book chronicles their growth from learning to skate, being paired together, to quickly becoming champions. We see their relationship grow from almost like siblings to friends, to partners, to lovers, to married and parents. Sergei is always portrayed as a very kind gentleman, who was always respectful to Katia and always cared for her. It came through in their skating, he always showed her off. All outside accounts also describe him as such a wonderful man. As I was reading, every page I turned, I wanted to stop time. We know Sergei is going to die, Katia will be a widow, and their daughter Daria will be left without a father. But we don't want this to happen. Read it with Kleenex handy! This book reads like Katia is speaking directly to us, like she is sitting in the room and telling us their story. The wording is sometimes a little stilted, as she learned English as a teenager. Sergei did not speak it (he did understand it, however) so Katia was their voice. He cared for her and protected her in so many ways, and this was her portion of helping. Even if you don't like skating, or never saw them skate (you can always watch on YouTube), this is a great book to read. A biography, autobiography, sports book, romance all rolled into one.

I really enjoyed watching figure skating when I was a kid, and I was 9 or 10 when I saw the docudrama on television when it aired in 1996; it really stuck with me for some reason. I first bought this book at a school book fair around the time it was published (I have no idea what this kind of book was doing at a MIDDLE school book fair, I might add). I didn't really get much from it and I think it was because, as a child, I just couldn't comprehend or relate to it; I ended up giving the book away a few years later. After watching the docudrama for the first time in like 13 years, I bought the book again for my Kindle. Now, at 24, the same age Katia was when all this happened, and after having been married myself for almost 3 years, re-reading her story has left a much greater and more profound impression on me. Gordeeva has a good narrating voice and a casual, yet deeply intimate, writing style that makes you feel like you're a close friend. I found the glimpses into her Soviet childhood (so different from an American one) and her intensive training as interesting as her unfolding love story with Sergei. The love story itself is so simple and natural that its appeal is immediate. But I think the real success of this book is in the fact that she's sort of given Sergei a voice. Because of the language barrier, he didn't speak in American/English-speaking broadcasts during TV profiles or interviews, Katia would do all the talking. So, you never got a good sense of who he was. But one thing that was clearly evident (on the ice and even when he was just sitting next to her in the profiles) was how much he adored Katia, and by the end of her book, you know

exactly why. The only regret you have after finishing the book is that you don't know MORE about Sergei because Katia herself was still learning things about him, things they perhaps hadn't thought to talk about, thinking they would have the next 50 years to keep discovering each other. That they didn't is another facet of the tragedy. Her closing words, so fearful and sad but also nostalgic and hopeful, will have you in tears. But the advantage of reading this book again 15 years after the fact is knowing that Katia did in fact do what she'd hoped: she just kept going, and you have to think that this, her insurmountable strength of will, is what Sergei saw and loved in her. They accomplished so much, for themselves, their daughter, their parents, their country, and it's all in here and you shouldn't pass this one up.

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