

The Enduring Love and Sacrifice: The Untold Story of the Morganatic Marriage of Grand Duke Michael, the Younger Brother

In the annals of Russian history, the grand dukes and duchesses of the Romanov dynasty have captured the imagination of countless generations. Among them, Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, the younger brother of Tsar Nicholas II, stands out for his unconventional and heartbreaking love story. Michael's morganatic marriage to Countess Natalia Brassova defied societal norms and ultimately led to his exile from the imperial court.

The Birth of a Grand Duke



The Grand Duke's Woman: The story of the morganatic marriage of Grand Duke Michael, the younger brother of Tsar Nicolas II by Catherine Malandrino

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Grand Duke Michael was born on December 14, 1878, at the Anichkov Palace in Saint Petersburg. As the fifth son of Emperor Alexander III and Empress Maria Feodorovna, he was initially fourth in line to the throne. However, with the deaths of his older brother, Tsarevich Alexander, and his uncle, Grand Duke George Alexandrovich, Michael moved up to second in line.

Michael's childhood was marked by privilege and seclusion. He received a private education at the Alexander Lyceum and served as a junior officer in the Russian Imperial Navy. Despite his position as a grand duke, Michael was known for his modesty and his deep interest in the arts and sciences.

A Forbidden Love

In 1909, Michael's life took an unexpected turn when he met Countess Natalia Brassova, the daughter of a prominent diplomat. Natalia was a divorcee and a commoner, making her an unsuitable match for a member of the imperial family. Despite the societal barriers, Michael and Natalia fell deeply in love.

Michael's love for Natalia was unwavering. He openly declared his intention to marry her, even though he knew it would incur the wrath of his family and the court. Empress Maria Feodorovna was adamant in her opposition, fearing that the marriage would damage the dynasty's reputation.

The Morganatic Marriage

In the face of intense pressure, Emperor Nicholas II reluctantly granted permission for Michael and Natalia to marry. However, he stipulated that

the marriage be morganatic, meaning that Natalia and their children would not inherit any of Michael's imperial titles or privileges.

On October 26, 1912, Grand Duke Michael and Countess Natalia Brassoova were married in a private ceremony in Saint Petersburg. The wedding caused a sensation in Russia and beyond, as it was the first time a member of the Romanov dynasty had entered into a morganatic marriage since the 17th century.

Exile and Sacrifice

The marriage had immediate consequences for Michael. He was stripped of his military rank, his appanage, and his place in the line of succession. Nicholas II banished his brother to the Caucasus, where Michael was placed under strict police surveillance.

Michael and Natalia lived in exile for the next four years. They had three children: Count George Brasov (1913-1981), Countess Marina Brasova (1914-1994), and Count Alexander Brasov (1915-2018). Life was difficult for the family, as they were cut off from their former wealth and status.

The First World War and Revolution

After the outbreak of the First World War, Michael was allowed to return to Russia and rejoin the Imperial Navy. He served with distinction, receiving several decorations for his bravery. However, his military career was cut short by the Russian Revolution in February 1917.

Michael and Natalia fled to England, where they lived in obscurity. They were never able to return to Russia, as the Bolsheviks murdered Nicholas II

and his family in July 1918.

Later Years and Legacy

Michael and Natalia lived a quiet life in England, devoting themselves to their children and grandchildren. Despite the hardships they endured, their love for each other never wavered. Michael died in 1948 at the age of 69. Natalia followed him in death in 1950.

The story of Grand Duke Michael and Countess Natalia Brassoova is a testament to the enduring power of love. It is a tale of sacrifice, exile, and the triumph of the human spirit. Their morganatic marriage, once considered a scandal, is now recognized as a symbol of resilience and the pursuit of happiness against all odds.



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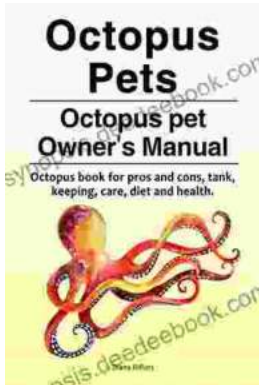
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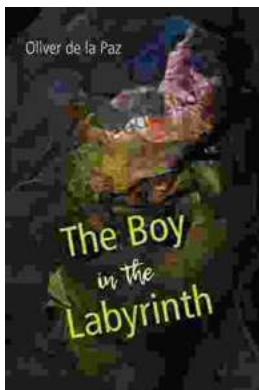
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