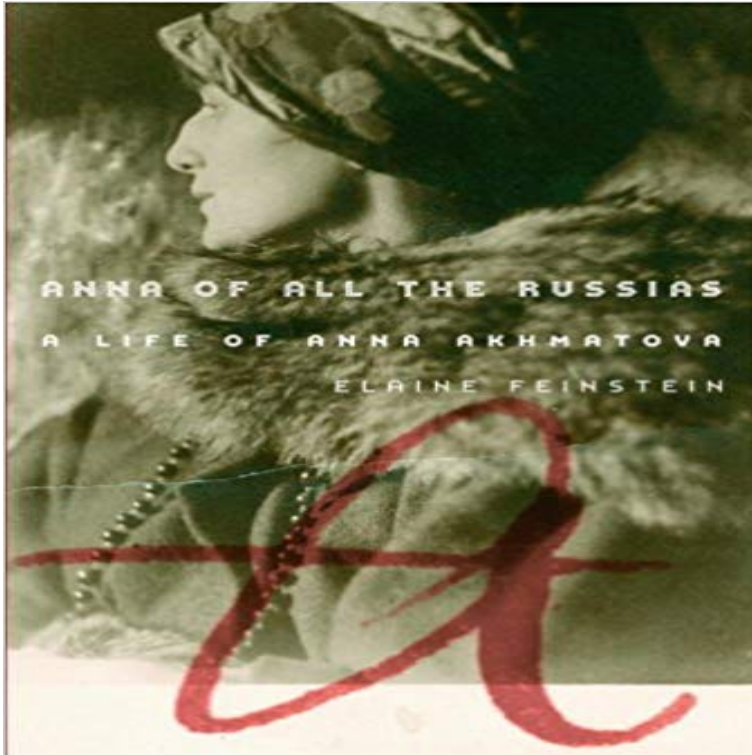


Anna of All the Russias: A Life of Anna Akhmatova



This comprehensive biography of the legendary Russian poet a rich narrative of the dramatic life behind the extraordinary work draws on a wealth of new material, including memoirs, letters and journals, and interviews with Akhmatovas surviving friends and family. Anna Akhmatova began writing in the years before World War I, a time when, according to Akhmatova herself, to think of a woman as a poet was absurd. Her genius would rise above categorization, but this superb biography makes clear how heavily she paid for the political and personal passions that informed it. A fierce poise, forged by Annas lonely childhood, carried her through her fathers resistance to her writing which prompted her to change her name from Gorenko to Akhmatova, a name taken from a Tartar ancestor - and her flawed but passionate love affairs. We see Akhmatovas work banned from 1925 until 1940, and banned again following World War II, when the Union of Soviet Writers labeled her half nun, half harlot. We see her steadfast resistance to Stalin during her hopeful but unsuccessful attempt to win her sons release from prison. We see her abiding loyalty to such friends as Mandelstam, Shostakovich and Pasternak as they faced Stalinist oppression. And we see how, through everything, Akhmatova continued to write, her poetry giving voice to the Russian people by whom she was, and still is, deeply loved. Anna of All the Russias takes us into the days and nights of an icon. It is a revelation of both the artist and the woman.

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