

# **A PEARL BEFORE SWINE**

By

Marisa Torre

1pg Introduction and  
10pg Treatment/Story Outline



INTRODUCTION  
**A PEARL BEFORE SWINE**  
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**A PEARL BEFORE SWINE** - A young lady of Royal privilege is forced into the harsh realities of common-folk and a common young man becomes her hero.

**Multiple Award Winner Treatment**

Period Drama **audience:** TITANIC, THE KING'S SPEECH

**Under 25 Male & Female:** Teen-aged leads and tie-in to High School lessons Combines film classics DR. ZHIVAGO and MY FAIR LADY still popular today

**Over 25 Male & Female:** Built-in audience with curiosity of story evolution

Based on G.B. Shaw's PYGMALION and the legend of Anastasia of Russia Public Domain since 2010 and 1977 respectively

Having previously transformed Eliza Doolittle from a lowly street-girl into a "consort for a king", in 1918 Prof Henry Higgins must now hide 17 yr old Imperial Grand Duchess Anastasia of Russia as a lowly household scrub-girl from the Bolshevik Secret Police on their mission to complete the Royal Family's execution.



**ANASTASIA age 17 and VIKTOR age 19 - antagonistic romantic teens**

Victor saves Anastasia's life at his own peril but she resents it, preferring to have died nobly with her family, until he wins her heart.

**PROF HIGGINS 50ish, ELIZA 25 -parental figures accept a new challenge**

Initially Higgins strongly refuses to help Anastasia until Eliza convinces him of the greater value to his reputation. He then exploits Anastasia to his own advantage causing her the very peril and possible death intended to be avoided.

**HIGGINS HOUSEHOLD STAFF - resentful, then become bonded friends**

They begrudge her privileged past but sympathize with her loss of family. When Anastasia works hard without complaints, they respect her, not for the Royalty she was born to, but for the Lady of courage and decency she makes of herself.

**KING'S NEPHEW, 25ish - roguish romantic hero w questionable motives**

He visits with gifts to claim Anastasia in marriage. She enjoys his company and invites him to return. Viktor seethes with jealous rage that King's Nephew seeks only profit\$ from Her Royal blood and suspects he informed the Bolsheviks.

**THE CAPTAIN and BOLSHEVIK AGENTS - ruthless menacing presence**

Anastasia is disposable baggage to them for profit and power in Party Ranks. As last pure blood of Czar, she can prove Bolshevik abuses and unlawful actions which compromise their tyrannical hold of political power unless she dies. Not recognizing Anastasia under their very noses in Higgins' home, they commandeer the house, trap Higgins, and terrorize the staff. All the while they torture Viktor, ironically, to reveal Anastasia's location.

**CHIMNEY SWEEP - Common Worker;** goes to The Palace to bring a rescue



### **OCTOBER 1917 Russian Revolution:**

The Bolsheviks have an easy victory over The Provisional Government; they take over State Banks, Post Office, trains, telegraph, and other tactical institutions. When the Royal Family is held in captivity at their country estate for ten months, The Bolshevik Secret Police assign 19yr old VIKTOR as one of their guards.

But even as his prisoner, it is ANASTASIA'S 17 yr old wilful ways and warm girlish charms that capture Viktor's heart.

The Royal Family is allowed all their familiar recreations and comforts of the estate allowing minimal but daily interaction.

Watching her every day, Viktor secretly admires her strong independent spirit and her innate sense of civic duty.

Anastasia sees him as the ever-militant child while she is forced into maturity by a situation not of her making.

Viktor feels it is his destiny to marry his altruistic political ideals with her worldly benevolence. But he knows the end they face.

Viktor manipulates The CAPTAIN'S Duty List to get himself assigned as an executioner to Anastasia, then loads his gun with blanks and secretly gives her a strong sedative to take when the Firing Squad assembles the Czar's Royal Family.

Later, when the bodies are removed, he defiantly escapes with hers in a wagon.

Viktor brings Anastasia 3,000 miles to London, where she may have other blood relatives besides Royals and they can put their school-taught English to good use. They travel mostly by freight train out of Russia, but walking, sometimes for days, to avoid Official border crossings in Europe.

All the while Anastasia is sick with grief, gunshot wounds, influenza ...and hunger.



### **FLASHBACK: Easter 1916**

At The Alexander Palace in Russia, 15-year-old Anastasia and her SISTERS, beautifully dressed, dance playfully in the Formal Reception Room.

Their mother, EMPRESS ALEXANDRA, engages the Royal Guests, and their father, NICHOLAS II, prepares to present the Faberge Egg.

There is awe and admiration, the music plays and guests applaud. As chubby children devour fancy sweets, elegant servants bring each of Nicholas' Gentlemen guests a bottle of the finest Champagne. Together they cheer with delight and pop the corks...



But in **JULY 1918;**

That beautiful memory of happy cheer becomes the execution order to "Fire!" And Champagne corks popping, become rifles shooting at her now war-ravaged Royal Family.

**SEPTEMBER 1918**; London England

Viktor arrives in London with Anastasia in a pushcart.

At the Embassy Office, his CONTACT has read a telegram about a "Diplomatic Visit". Under the pretext of an "Export" issue, Officials of the newly Russian Socialist Republic include The Bolshevik Secret Police and they will arrive next month. But, according to recent underground newspapers, they know Anastasia is still alive and their intentions are to shoot her on sight, with impunity. There is only one place the Bolsheviks have never heard of, and they will be safe.

At the back door of Prof. Henry Higgins' home, Viktor thanks his contact from The Embassy for bringing them to safety.



Meanwhile, a dirty, raggedy young woman, barely alive, is being shooed away by MRS. PEARCE and THE BUTLER, until ELIZA DOOLITTLE stops them.

She recognizes her as The Imperial Grand Duchess Anastasia of Russia and shows them a picture in the newspaper.

She must have survived her Royal Family's execution by the Bolsheviks. Anastasia is overwhelmed by Eliza's kindness and is brought in unconscious to be cared for.

Viktor pleads with a very reluctant HENRY HIGGINS to hide her until the Bolshevik executioners stop looking for her in England because they've never heard of him.

There has been a telegram about a "diplomatic visit" from the Bolshevik's Agents within the month, depending on the weather. There are reports that they know Anastasia is still alive, but they won't think to look here if they've never heard of Higgins.

Viktor wants them to live out a dignified working-class life in London where it is possible she has more family besides Royals.

Viktor also stands to be killed for treason if he is discovered: He defected from The Bolshevik Army and severed his past. He also seeks refuge for the present. He faces his own expatriate and uncertain future.



Higgins' reluctance is political, personal and professional;

Before the Revolution, Anastasia's family hoped to seek sanctuary in England, as they are blood cousins to the British Royal family.

But the British Government won't accept any of the Czar's family, fearing it would imply a declaration of war and cause civil protests in England.

Higgins doesn't mind being shunned by stodgy Government officials, but dreads being favoured by foppish Royals.

And it goes against Higgins' personal and professional principles to lower a person's status in life instead of elevating; besides, it's just too dangerous for him.

The Captain and his Bolshevik Secret Police will deny any intent to kill Anastasia.



But she can prove the Bolsheviks' abusive and unconstitutional actions which compromise their political power. And as the last pure blood of the Czar, she represents The Captain's personal failure to execute the entire Royal Family.

The Captain has an urgent priority to "remove" this embarrassment and earn his redemption for a lifetime of prestige and power within the Party ranks.

Higgins doesn't want to be in such danger to hide Anastasia, a stranger, here in his own home. Besides, he has established himself as a pillar of neutrality serving his own interest as an Academic Professional and a frequent guest at State Affairs. Higgins is adamant in his refusal and makes a plan for them to leave.



Until ... It occurs to Eliza that Higgins wouldn't have to hide an 'Imperial Duchess' if ... Anastasia is on his household staff as just one of the working class. But Higgins can't be bothered with the risk, she is not his problem and he orders a taxi. Eliza explains; this could be an endeavour of value to him as an experiment in linguistics, comportment and social comment. Higgins could lead a whole new class of deposed aristocrats adjusting to a life as commoners.



There could even be a book in it for him with new sources of revenue and elevated stature among the Academia.

Who else could have such providence, gratis, at his own backdoor?

Higgins finally accepts Anastasia as an equal challenge as was Eliza!

But when Anastasia revives, she refuses their plan.

She hates Viktor.

If she could not die with her family, Anastasia prefers to face her fate as the Russian Royalty that she is; to expose the Bolsheviks' actions and dedicate her life writing a book to defend her father's honourable intentions about his misguided attacks on the innocents.

Anastasia is not afraid to work hard as a domestic, but she detests and protests having to deny her true identity.

She feels it is a betrayal to the way she was raised by her parents.

The world should know that they lived simply and were against the ostentatious squandering of the Russian Royal Family's wealth.

She tries to escape, but she faints, still emaciated and weak.

She has no choice but to stay put for at least a few more meals.

Higgins instructs his HOUSEHOLD STAFF to spend all of Anastasia's waking moments engaged in Cockney conversation with her, even while she eats. Some on staff resent her privileged past but sympathize with her loss of family.

Anastasia's first days are an emotional mess.

She swings between manic bursts as an energetic teenage girl with a zest for life and then bouts of debilitating mourning and grief.

She suffers nightmares and insomnia.

She was also well known for pranks on household members and servants, which she still does.

In a few days, after a formal dinner party Prof Higgins gives in honour of an esteemed colleague, the household staff has a happy celebration of their own with the posh leftovers of gourmet cuisine.

Anastasia interrupts their enjoyment with a harsh criticism; that they lack ambition to have their own colleagues of esteem and affluence.

Have they no pride-of-ownership for a home of their own!?

Mrs. Pearce, the Butler and the elder kindler of the household staff explains their preference for working in a grand house like this one instead of owning a small one of their own:

**The scraps of the rich is better  
than the feast of the poor.**



Home ownership is a heavy burden fraught with financial responsibility and to be 'house-proud' brings the added toil of maintenance. They reveal the higher ambitions they have with talents and dreams their employers don't even care to know about.

She must temper her distain; now, they are all just "pearls before swine" like her. They make her feel welcome and safe despite the possible danger to them if the Bolsheviks find they have conspired to hide her here.

Anastasia finally accepts the harsh reality that her future depends on that plan.

-But only long enough to fool the Bolshevik Executioners while they search for her in England.

Then she will find a way to redeem her family's honour, even as a commoner.

Now they can really get down to work.

Higgins modifies the lessons and procedures which he previously used to teach Eliza the proper behaviour and speech of an elegant upper-class lady.

He now teaches Anastasia the unrefined mannerisms, tough attitudes and rough sloppy speech of the working class.

Eliza teaches Anastasia her old flower-girl street slang, and they bond as friends.



Viktor also needs a job.

Since Higgins cannot fathom the operation of his new fangled 'Auto-mobility transportation device', (car)

Viktor is hired to work as the driver of Higgins' Rolls Royce, -and quite possibly protection. Besides Viktor's technical military training, he has the mind-set of the working class and makes an easy transition.



And, being near Anastasia every day, he tries valiantly to win her heart.

Viktor applies his work ethic to learn slang and Cockney colloquialism from the household staff, ironically, to hide his perfect English even with a heavy accent.

But Anastasia has a lifetime of assumed privilege to overcome.



Occasionally, news of The British Royals reminds Anastasia of her life in the past.

### **Flashback: SUMMER 1916**

Anastasia remembers relaxing with her adoring parents, playing with her brother and sisters, all her pretty clothes, the plush comfort of her perfect bedroom, and the family meals...

### **Return to OCTOBER 1918**

Sometimes, she forgets her place and, at the table, still expects to be waited on instead of waiting on.

Anastasia works hard cooking, cleaning and doing laundry. She finds it easy to be less graceful and more inelegant through sheer physical exhaustion.

It even bends her inherently regal posture.

She begins to appreciate the comfortable refuge of Viktor's cultural familiarity and his noble intentions.

Anastasia finally learns to speak in lower class colloquialism, but she is well educated, experienced and opinionated far beyond the scope of any common working-class scrub-girl.

Even in bad English, she has intelligent, insightful conversations when G.B. Shaw visits Prof Higgins and, also when Stravinsky, Freud and Picasso come for tea.

As the weeks go by, the household settles into a pleasant and industrious routine.

Higgins reluctantly mentions that perhaps the Bolsheviks really don't know she is here if they haven't visited yet. Pity, all his work going untested...

Viktor dares to believe that all his hopes and dreams are coming to fruition.

Anastasia has made dear friends and a new family with a dignified future.

Eliza suggests this could be their permanent situation.

Soon a roguish nephew of the King finds out that Anastasia is here.

KING'S NEPHEW visits Anastasia at Higgins' house with exquisite gifts for her, pretty new clothes and the intention to claim her in marriage as she was promised to him as children.



He can offer her the regal lifestyle she is accustomed to, an exciting social life and all the resources to write her book and defend her father's legacy.

Anastasia enjoys his company and invites him to return.

Viktor seethes with jealous rage.

He threatens to kill Anastasia before he sees her compromise herself and her legacy on the pretences of marginal Royals who gain status and financial profit from Her Royal blood line.

-and after everything he has done and sacrificed for her!

Viktor storms out and doesn't return that night.

In the morning, The Captain and His Bolshevik Agents arrive at Higgins' home before Viktor can get back.

When they arrive, Anastasia is outside scrubbing the front entrance and cleaning the door.

She is ordered to summon Prof Higgins and let them in.

She obediently opens the door and allows them to enter.

Anastasia fools them very well enough, at first.



When she offers to take their coats, they look her over.

She should know better than to presume herself worthy to receive their coats. Anastasia suffers their rude arrogance because she is dirty and beneath even a simple maid or housekeeper.

They are offended that she would deny them a proper butler to show them in.

The Captain bellows and guffaws and sends her away...

Higgins, secretly delighted, greets them in all (faux) apologies and invites The Captain to do a thorough search of his home in full co-operation of their mission. Agents look around and question everyone. After an hour or so, satisfied that The Grand Duchess Anastasia of Russia is not there, they begin their polite good-byes.

In her little room, Anastasia is so happy it's all over, finally safe and free forever.

But Higgins, still revelling in his victory, invites the Agents to stay for tea.

Higgins gives Anastasia a uniform and forces her to serve them -to flaunt his coveted pearl right under their pompous snouts.

Ah, yes, a most satisfying day indeed!

Again, Anastasia fools them well ... until...

One of the Bolshevik Agents recognizes Viktor returning to the house.

There is a chase, and a fight,

and then,

a gunshot!



# Intermission

In a whirlwind of clever blows Viktor escapes, and only by outnumbering him do the Bolshevik Agents capture him and tie him in the basement.



The Captain offers him a deal; Viktor's total pardon, a cash reward and a free new life, in exchange for Anastasia's location. The Captain commandeers Higgins' home in case Anastasia goes there to find Viktor.

They ransack Higgins' elegant house to a shamble for any minute shred of information, they control all communications in and out of the home, guard all the doors and windows, and scrutinize every activity.

The Captain is now bitterly rude and militant with Higgins for such a deception.

In Russia, he would be allowed to kill off Higgins and his household for such conspiracy of betrayal. Eliza assures him Viktor's speech gave no sign he was a foreigner let alone a fugitive.

The Captain tries to strike Eliza but is stopped by Higgins, who struggles, more of spirit than of strength, before they relent.



Anastasia must stand openly in sight of Bolshevik Agents for frequent inspections.

And soon the King's Nephew will be calling for Anastasia openly and unaware...

While Viktor is tortured and questioned in the cold dark squalor of the basement,



Higgins is tortured with rage in the warmth of his luxurious bedroom.

Eliza is a harsh taskmaster in front of guards allowing Anastasia to eavesdrop on Agents' conversations and then translate to Higgins.

Higgins is kept in his bedroom and study, let out only to eat with the Agents.

Viktor is kept tied-up and beaten, fed only enough to keep alive until he talks.

Eliza is kept busy orchestrating meals and tea for Agents and guards.

Anastasia is kept dirty and ragged and quiet during inspections.

In airs of elitist entitlement, the Bolshevik Agents indulge in taunting the female staff with mock flirtations, sometimes getting too close for comfort with the more sensitive women who now resent being in a position of such peril for Anastasia.

In a weak moment of Anastasia's remorse and distress, a very resentful servant convinces Anastasia to put an end to all this suffering and give herself up!

While Anastasia walks solemnly toward the Bolsheviks' room, another servant sees her take off her dust-bonnet and clean her face. When Anastasia even resumes her inherently regal posture, the servant understands and runs off.

At the door, Anastasia is grabbed from behind and muffled while kicking and struggling to get free as she is dragged to the kitchen and thrown to the floor.

It is the Butler. His breath heaving with sweat and scorn, he assures Anastasia she is worth saving; not for the Aristocracy she was born into, but for the Lady of courage and decency she has made of herself, and her inspiration to all of them. They will find another way.

The Bolshevik Agents have no choice but to allow deliveries and services. They must not stir suspicion that would bring the authorities to interfere.

Anastasia and the staff use their contact with tradesmen at the back door to speak in Cockney, like a secret code, right in front of the Bolshevik Guards.



It takes a while, but finally it's the CHIMNEYSWEEP who clues-in to what is going on and what must be done to rescue them.

Anastasia gives him a phrase that the Bolshevik guards don't care about -but the King's Nephew will recognize it must be from her.

**"The Scraps of the rich is better  
than the feast of the poor."**

With haste, the Chimneysweep goes to the Embassy where they refuse him entry because of his dirty smelly clothes.

He goes to the local Police where he has a reputation for being a drunkard and is laughed out of the building and almost arrested.

He goes to Scotland Yard, but they don't believe him.

Back at the house, Anastasia suffers each minute enduring the anguished tyranny imposed upon Viktor, Higgins, and Eliza by The Captain and his Bolsheviks Agents. The household staff tries to comfort Anastasia and encourages her to be strong.

In town, the Chimneysweep decides he'll go directly to Buckingham Palace.

At the servant's port and blending in as the Service Staff, the Chimneysweep finagles his way in to speak to an acquaintance in the furnace room. He finally convinces the Palace staff to get a message to the King's Nephew.

When King's Nephew recognizes the phrase, which could only be from Anastasia, Chimneysweep is summoned to devise a plan.

King's Nephew uses his telephonic device, and with only one call engages the Palace Guards, Embassy Security, Scotland Yard and the Police.



Under the dark quiet cover of nightfall, they assemble outside Higgins' house.

In increments of calculated timing and stealthy precision they get all the women out and take the place of the male staff.

They deftly execute a harrowing capture and the arrest of all the Bolshevik Agents.

Assuming Anastasia will marry him, King's Nephew leads the Palace Guards and makes a heroic rescue to free Viktor.

He advises Viktor to leave England without Anastasia.

Viktor accuses him of informing the Bolsheviks for his own selfish gain. -how else could they show up the day after he visits Anastasia!? They argue, and fight. But Victor is held back by King's Nephew's Palace Guards and unfairly subdued.

King's Nephew plans a glorious gala-ball to reveal Anastasia as his bride.

Higgins makes a strong case for Anastasia to remain with her own Royal kind.

Eliza's affectionate bond for Anastasia wants to keep her around as a friend.

At a fitting for the prettiest new fashions, they map out a delightful future for Anastasia as Royal elite, authoress and philanthropist with the noblest of causes.

Anastasia, now beautifully dressed, is introduced to the Royal Family's Publisher of Biographies and is then presented to, her Mother's Cousin, the King of England.

It is an otherwise simple, personable occasion replete with regal opulence; gentle music, the finest tea, gourmet treats and of course the sweets ... just like home ...

Anastasia relaxes in the familiar surroundings and comforts of her childhood.

They have easy and pleasant conversation with witty family anecdotes.

Then, as they share some fond recollections, it occurs to Anastasia to look around.

She sees that these are not the elegant servants of Easter 1916;

most of them are guards – heavily armed guards.



She has **FLASHBACKS** of her Royal Family in captivity. And Viktor...

And even **NOW**, heavily armed guards are always within view;

as she tours Buckingham Palace to bask in Royal-Family nostalgia,

or strolls the grounds for a breath of fresh air with some playful exercise,

even when she needs the privacy of her boudoir or the toilette.

When she visits the kitchen, just to pinch a taste of today's dinner, the guards are cross with her and she is denied. It is just too dangerous and beneath her class.

Anastasia has a new nostalgia; being deprived those of her own kindred-spirit.

King's Nephew makes grand romantic overtures with flowers, furs, and jewels.

Soon Anastasia hears him have secretive conversations on his telephonic device.

She wonders about his motive\$ and how many other women he could have.

He always hovers, ever so affectionately and often tries, ever so gently for a kiss...

But Anastasia's heart is with Viktor.

As a Royal she would always be the target of assassination, scrutiny and betrayal.

Only with Viktor can she be truly free for a happy and productive private life.

Anastasia cleverly schemes to contact Viktor aided by Higgins' Household Staff.

No longer emaciated and weak, she escapes the Palace as one of the Service staff.

This time, it is she who defiantly dares to escape with her true love, most willingly.

She will marry Viktor and take his name,

even in obscurity, forever.

**The End**

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**Multiple Award-Winning Screenwriter** since 2015 including:  
Cannes 2015/6



**Marisa Torre**  
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**Studied:** Film Arts at Ryerson

Fashion Arts and Business at Seneca

Screenwriting with Larry Kasdan

2 yrs Royal Conservatory of Music

**Worked:** 12 years York Region District School Board, Educational Assistant

5 yrs Volunteer - Art Gallery Ontario (AGO), TIFF, Cdn Film Fest

2 years TV Assoc. Producer - Rogers TV

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**Written:**

12 Children's Books

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4 Feature Films

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