

The Accidental Empress: A Novel

Allison Pataki

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The Accidental Empress is the fascinating and foundational story of this little-known, yet highly significant empress—a must read for anyone interested in the sequel Sisi.

A *New York Times* bestseller, *The Accidental Empress* is the love story of "Sisi" the Austro-Hungarian Empress and wife of Emperor Franz Joseph is "captivating, absorbing, and beautifully told" (Kathleen Grissom).

The year is 1853, and the Habsburgs are Europe's most powerful ruling family. With his empire stretching from Austria to Russia, from Germany to Italy, Emperor Franz Joseph is young, rich, and ready to marry.

Fifteen-year-old Elisabeth, "Sisi," Duchess of Bavaria, travels to the Habsburg Court with her older sister, who is betrothed to the young emperor. But shortly after her arrival at court, Sisi finds herself in an unexpected dilemma: she has inadvertently fallen for and won the heart of her sister's groom. Franz Joseph reneges on his earlier proposal and declares his intention to marry Sisi instead.

Thrust onto the throne of Europe's most treacherous imperial court, Sisi upsets political and familial loyalties in her quest to win, and keep, the love of her emperor, her people, and of the world.

With Pataki's rich period detail and cast of complex, bewitching characters, *The Accidental Empress* offers "another absolutely compelling story" (Mary Higgins Clark) with this glimpse into one of history's most intriguing royal families, shedding new light on the glittering Hapsburg Empire and its most mesmerizing, most beloved "Fairy Queen."



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