

# [PDF] The Accidental Anarchist

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## Books Details:

Title: The Accidental Anarchist

Author:

Released: 2010-10-22

Language:

Pages: 332

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### Description:

**Review** "This story is told by Bryna Kranzler, the granddaughter of Jacob Marateck. Ms. Kranzler's captivating writing technique envelops the reader with Marateck's magnetic personality.

These conversations, events that should have been muddied by the ravages of time and history, are rewritten with incredible detail and exquisite narrative that pushes the reader ever-onward, hanging upon baited breath with each sentence. Yet between Marateck's notes and Ms. Kranzler's consistent ability to wrap it into moving prose, this memoir reads much more like a thrilling novel. In some cases, truth is indeed stranger than fiction.

Marateck bares his heart through his carefully detailed notes. They become a symphony representing a brilliant, singularly valiant human life enveloped within the loving care of the author's loving dedication. The Accidental Anarchist begins with a powerful allegro of youth, in

which Marateck throws his life about in a careless affront to its sacred value."

--New York Journal of Books

"The Accidental Anarchist is a profound testament to the power of faith, and to the continued survival of the Jewish people."

--*Elie Wiesel*

"The Accidental Anarchist is the true story of Jacob Marateck, but it reads and feels like a great novel. In fact, as I raced through Jacob's adventures, I realized that no Hollywood screenwriter could ever invent such an extraordinary tale. ...Marateck, with a great eye for detail, manages to infuse every image and incident with his own unique optimism and an inspirational Jewish world view."

--*Robert J. Avrech, The Hebrew Kid and the Apache Maiden.*

"...This book will captivate students... It is an extension of the heart of ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT, the soul of searing Gulag writings, and the pathos and futility of CATCH-22--suffused at every turn with the grit and wit of mendicant Judaism."

--*Herman Mast III, Emeritus, Department of History, University of Connecticut*

"In a time between many wars and the falls of empires, "The Accidental Anarchist" tells the story of Jacob Marateck, an unusual rogue Jew who found himself leading Russian armies that hated him, into failed coups against the Czar. ...A riveting read about one of the truly unique characters and stories of history that is not often heard about."

--*Midwest Book Review*

"Readers interested in European or Jewish history, war stories, and just plain action adventure will enjoy this book. Kranzler's editing creates a smooth style with a quick pace while retaining her grandfather's unique voice and perspective. ...A likable hero on an epic journey."

--*ForeWord Reviews*

"A splendid, highly-recommended companion piece for students confronting the late-19th & early-20th century pivotal point in modern world history... It is an extension of the heart of ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT, the soul of searing Gulag writings & the pathos and futility of CATCH-22--suffused at every turn with the grit and wit of mendicant Judaism."

--*Herman Mast III, Emeritus, Department of History, UCONN*

## **From the Author Book Club Reader's Guide**

### **About the Book:**

The Accidental Anarchist is the true story of an Orthodox Jew who was sentenced to death three times in the early 1900s in Russia - and lived to tell about it.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Why did Jacob Marateck begin keeping a diary?
2. What role did friendship play in the book?
3. Would you have made the same moral choices that Marateck made (eg., helping his army friend get transferred to another regiment, rejecting Pyavka's suggestion for what they needed to do to get home)?
4. What role did women play in Marateck's survival?
5. What were the most important survival skills that Jacob Marateck demonstrated?
6. Who was your favorite character, and why?
7. Does this book have the same relevance for non-Jews as well as Jews?

8. What messages did you take from this book, and are they still relevant today?

**Critical Praise:**

*"The Accidental Anarchist is a profound testament to the power of faith, and to the continued survival of the Jewish people."*

\* Elie Wiesel

*"Readers interested in European or Jewish history, war stories, and just plain action adventure will enjoy this book. Kranzler's editing creates a smooth style with a quick pace while retaining her grandfather's unique voice and perspective. The Accidental Anarchist is the true story of a likable hero on an epic journey."*

\* **ForeWord Reviews**

*"Indeed, the adventures in this novel are many, and unforeseen. Variety-spiced life mixed with historical events of the 1900s in Russia and Poland sees Marateck moving on from student to baker's assistant, labor organizer to an officer in the Russian army during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 against the Japanese in China. Marateck has his own struggles close at hand, too, in situations "in which the men under my command wanted to kill me, simply for being a Jew, as much as the enemy did, simply for being in the way."*

\* **Seattle Post-Intelligencer**

*"Marateck is an extraordinary character facing certain death many times with consistent humor and steadfast faith in God. The reader certainly does not need to be an Orthodox Jew to appreciate the intense commitment Marateck has to his faith and his religious duty. His notes reveal a breathtaking ability to absorb the absurd that life dishes out to a lowly Jew in the Czar's anti-Semitic army with aplomb and grace."*

\* **New York Journal of Books**

*"I found myself so fascinated by The Accidental Anarchist that I thought about it at work, wondered what would happen during dinner, and picked it up each night before bed. Several nights I went to sleep much later than I had intended because I was simply unaware how much time was passing. One reason for this is that Kranzler does a remarkable job of turning a life into a narrative. The reader knows what drives Marateck and wants to know whether or not he achieves his goal."*

\* **The Bookshelf**

**Awards:**

WINNER, 2012 Readers' Favorite, Non-Fiction: Historical/Cultural

WINNER, 2012 National Indie Excellence Award

WINNER 2012 International Book Awards, Biography: Historical

WINNER, USA "Best Books of 2011" Award, Biography: Historical

**Excerpt:**

**Chapter 1: In the Beginning**

I have no excuse, save for the ignorance of youth and a desire for grand adventure, which may have been one and the same thing. Consequently, the seemingly minor decision I made to end my education before the age of thirteen led me down a path from which each future choice was misdirected by the previous foolish one.

Not that I didn't have a loving family to guide me, particularly my older brother, Mordechai, who had seen me risk my life repeatedly but was unable to convince me to make at least one sensible decision. There was simply too much fun to be had.

The result was that, in a little over ten years, I went from being a *yeshiva*[1]student, a baker's assistant, and labor organizer, to a corporal in the Russian army during the war in Manchuria (in which the men under my command wanted to kill me, simply for being a Jew, as much as the enemy did, simply for being in the way), to a revolutionary. For my efforts, I earned my first two death sentences, which was a little more excitement than I needed.

This limited my curiosity as to whether my end would come from freezing or starvation, from Japanese artillery or Chinese bandits, and whether it would be today or tomorrow. From my experiences with the comically inept Russian army (at least, it would have been comical had our lives not been at stake), I learned that, no matter how terrible it was for anyone to be in the midst of a war, it was a hundred times worse being on the losing side.

Still, I was slow to put into practice the lessons from my youth and, following the war, became a revolutionary who wanted to overthrow the Czar. This got me involved in amateur spy missions that would have gotten a Hollywood screenwriter fired, but got me sentenced to death for the third time.

As a result, I travelled the width of Russia, from Petersburg[2] to Siberia, where my adventures were to have come to an end. But even if my record wasn't clean, my conscience was; everything I did was done with the most honorable intentions.

And ultimately provided enough excitement to last a lifetime.

(©Bryna Kranzler 2010)

#### **Author Bio:**

Bryna Kranzler is a graduate of Barnard College where she studied playwriting, and received the Helen Price Memorial Prize for Dramatic Composition. Her first play was a finalist for the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theater Competition, and was scheduled for production twice: the first time, the theater owner died, and the season was shut down; the second time, the director committed suicide. For the benefit of the arts community, she out of playwriting and pursued an MBA at Yale University. She spent 15 years in marketing for health-care, high tech and consumer products companies before returning to writing.

#### **Website:**

[TheAccidentalAnarchist.com](http://TheAccidentalAnarchist.com)

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