



# The Sniper

*James Riordan*

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## **The Sniper** James Riordan

Stalingrad snipers were legends in their time. Their patience, keen eyes, and ruthlessness helped win the Battle of Stalingrad and turn the tide of the Second World War. James Riordan visited Stalingrad in 1959 and several times later. In 2006 he met Tania Chernova, whose story was so fascinating that Riordan made her the heroine of this compelling novel. The year is 1942. Legendary sniper Vasily Zaitsev, who killed a record 242 Nazis, recruits Tania to seek out and shoot German officers. At first, she finds it almost impossible to kill. But when she discovers that her beloved grandparents, along with many of her friends, have been brutally murdered by invading Nazis, she vows to “break them like sticks.” Following her capture and daredevil escape, she leads a handpicked unit on what seems like a suicide mission — to seize Field Marshall Paulus, the Commander-in-Chief of the invading army. But Tania is no ordinary marksman. Author Riordan’s dramatic narrative and wealth of period detail make this story of one of the lesser-known episodes in World War II history a gripping one.

## **The Sniper Details**

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Author : James Riordan

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# From Reader Review The Sniper for online ebook

## Carson says

Name: Beyersdorf Carson

Book title: *The Sniper*

### Personal Response:

I personally liked this book because of my interest in the time period. The book lets the reader know about a female schoolgirl who overcomes her fear of killing and kills about 84 Germans. The story takes you on an adventure of grief, joy, and pain.

### Plot summary:

Tania Belova is a 16 yr old girl helping her school dig sandbags when they are attacked by German aircraft. When they get back to school Tania and her classmates are drafted into the russian military. Tania and a few fellow classmates are now a part of a russian anti-aircraft unit but are shortly after drafted into the sniper core. She is then considered to weak and is sent to transport a set of POWs and gets back only to be on the german side. She escapes only to almost be killed by a german guard and then almost killed by a russian patrol. She is brought back to base camp and is given orders to capture Field Marshal Von Paulus.

### Recommendation:

I would recommend this book to high schoolers mostly boys and maybe girls. Mostly because of the gore and time period at which this book is written in.

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## Brent Minery says

This book was a fast paced action packed book and i would recommend it to all readers

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## Levi Greening says

This book is about a girl named Tania Chernovia. She is a legendary sniper in World War Two. The book starts when Tania is at school one day in the town of Stalingrad. Stalingrad is in Russia. They were outside at recess when all of a sudden they saw bee shaped things really far up in the sky. What they didn't know is that they were the Germans starting to devastate their town. All of a sudden it started raining down bombs. The whole Russian country was about to get into the great war named World War Two. Tania was then selected to be in a special sniper unit the Russian army. That is how it started. She lost her whole family in the war and she was on her own. She killed 67 Germans sticks or officers. Then one fatal day that came to an end, when she lost her life to a German officers in a gunfight.

Tania was an active and simple girl before she got called into the Russian army. She always wanted to be a

nurse when she grew up but that never happened. She liked to take care of people and when she saw the nurses in the war she got jealous. But at the same time she liked her duty in the war. She lost her parents in the war and she was on her own. She then turned shy and not talkative. But she knew she had to fend for her own and she adapted to that. She could not make friends that easily in the beginning of the war because almost everyone was male. She struggles at even knowing what to say when she talks to her officers. She expects the war to be over within two weeks but it went for a lot longer. But as the war went on she started to gain confidence in everything she had to do. She could talk and make friends more often. She will never give up in the war.

This novel would be good for people in high school who have an interest in war and maybe interested in going into the army. The topics in this book can be disturbing and rude sometimes. This book tells about life at its wits end and about death of family members. This book is nonfiction and real. It tells true events in the war that are very disturbing and bloody. It has a couple of swear words but it's only a couple. All in all it is a very accurate book and will help you learn about other nation's history.

I gave this book a 5 out of 5 stars because I like to learn about other country's history than our country. I liked every aspect of this book in all its ways and shapes. This is a very important aspect in the war. I would like to read it again it was that good.

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## **Wheader says**

This book takes place in Russia. The main character is Tania, a young girl which I'm guessing is around 14-15 years old. During the book, Tania's views on war changed. In the beginning of the book, she wanted to be a medic, but when the general told her that she is now a sniper she didn't agree. When she was being transported around, the driver told her his beliefs on war, kill or be killed. That changed the whole war for her.

While reading this book made me think and wonder about many things. Actually, my beliefs on war have changed, and how lucky we are to be in a safe place of the world. In this book, they talked a lot on how Tania's hometown got destroyed and there was nothing left that would even be liveable in.

I had this book recommended by a friend and I would do the same. I think anybody would generally like this book just because it is so interesting. I would definitely rate this book 5 out of 5.

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## **L.H. Johnson says**

I first came across James Riordan with his excellent *The Cello* so I was interested to discover this title whilst browsing the shelves recently. It's set in Stalingrad in 1942 and, I think, spectacularly misleading in how it's presented. The cover to me is resolutely masculine with a figure that is too indistinct to accurately gender. The blurb on the back pages obviously (and awkwardly) avoids using gendered pronouns, referring to the true story of a 'teenage sniper recruited in 1942 ... the younger finds it almost as impossible to kill ... the sniper ... this sniper is no ordinary marksman'.

So to discover that this is actually the story of Tania Belova, young female sniper recruited into the Russian Army, came as a bit of a surprise. I appreciate coy promotional text, and I appreciate trying to hide 'the twists' but Tania's story is massive, and to be so reticent about selling this book as what it is, struck me as worthy of comment.

Once you get into the book itself, Riordan is very competent but strangely cool. There are moments when he surpasses himself. The opening chapters for one, where we see a sniper at work, and then the others where we're at school seeing the shift between this life and Tania's-life-to-come. But in other moments, moments of great tragedy, there's a curiously dispassionate tone to the text that devoid it of any emotional impact.

*The Sniper* covers an area of history that I've rarely read about in young adult literature, and it covers it from an angle that is fascinating. The problem is that all too often it slides into being too far removed from its story, and the story is what makes this book worth reading. I'd recommend it for those interested in this period of history. I'd be reluctant to recommend it for those who are not.

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## **Garrett Pope says**

Personal Response: I thought that this book was all right for being a realistic fiction book about World War II. The only bad part about this book was one sappy love scene. Otherwise, the book was pretty good.

Plot: *The Sniper* by James Riordan is about a girl who becomes a really good Stalingrad sniper in World War II. Tania Chernova was just an ordinary school girl, until the day the Germans invaded Stalingrad. She was assigned the job of shooting the anti-aircraft gun. Tania shot down nine German fighter planes. Miss Chernova was then handpicked by Vasily Zaitsev, the famous sniper who shot over 200 Nazis. Tania starts slowly at killing Nazis, but she finds out that her grandparents and some of her good friends were killed by Nazis. She really wants to kill as many Nazis as soon as she can find them. She gets captured by some Nazis but escapes. Vasily assigns Tania to a suicide mission, to capture Field Marshall Paulus. Mister Paulus happens to be the commander-in-chief of the Nazis. Tania goes on the mission and succeeds, which ends the book

Characterization: Tania goes from a school girl who doesn't want to hurt anyone to a really good sniper who wants to kill every German she can find to avenge her grandparents and her friends were killed by Nazis.

Recommendation: I recommend this book to both males and females because there are parts in this book that either gender would like. For the males, the whole book is about World War II and most males like books about war. For the females, the main character is a girl and there is a love scene. Most females like love scenes and like it when the main character is a girl.

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## Terri says

Three and a half stars of five stars. I really wanted to like this book. I love the title - "The Sniper." I love the cover - scenes of war in red and black. I love the topic - WWII Russian female snipers and spies. I love the opening scene - a sniper methodically picking off German soldiers. Boys pick up the book simply because of these things. However, the book fell a bit short for me.

"The Sniper" tells the true story of sixteen year old Russian schoolgirl Tania. When the Germans suddenly appear at the gates of Stalingrad all citizens join forces to keep them at bay, including children. Tania finds herself serving in the Red Army. When she demonstrates leadership, fearlessness, and skill, she finds herself employed as a Russian sniper. Despite the fact that Tania is in the middle of a war, the plot moved slowly at times. The last chapter is like a textbook example of writing a denouement - no subtlety whatsoever - just a list of what Tania had experienced. And the author did not directly correlate the opening scene back to Tania, which left the novel feeling unfinished.

Riordan tells this story rather dispassionately and, as a result, it was difficult to invest in the characters. What Tania experiences, what she loses, would bring most humans to their knees. I wanted to feel what she was feeling and empathize with her. For example, I did not shed a tear when she witnesses what happens to her brother. Whereas, in "Night" by Elie Wiesel, the scene in which the child is hung is one of the most compelling scenes in all of literature. It brought me to tears and is something I will never forget. The fault here is not in the story itself but in the telling.

Still, for reluctant readers, "The Sniper" might hold their interest, especially if they have read little on the subject previously. This would be nice paired with "Tamar" by Mal Peet, Beryl Markham's "West with the Night," or Elizabeth Wein's new book "Code Name Verity." "The Sniper" was just O.K. for me.

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## Greg says

This book is extremely good. The plot is very attractive in my opinion. The main character, Tonia, is followed as she fights to protect as well as survive the the invasion of Stalingrad. Combining historical and fictional information, this book is perfect for any reader.

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## Ricky Branch says

It wasnt interesting at all i got bored and sleepy while reading it

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## Sarah says

A short novel, but a very well told story, rich with the details of the struggle in Stalingrad. When I started this book I had no idea the main protagonist would be a young girl. I thought it would be another story centred mostly around Vasily Zaitsev, the famous Russian sniper. While he is featured, the story follows a

young 16 year old girl who is eventually trained by Zaitsev.

I haven't read many war books and I found that the descriptions and details shared by the writer created a very real experience of what that war must have been like. I could almost smell, taste, and feel the beleaguered city.

Highly recommend for young adults and adults. It was told well in a short span, but I still wish it could have been longer.

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### **Jon K says**

It had tons of action. at the end it had an interveiw of a world war 2 soldier. It had a lot of detail and very interesting

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### **Ricky Schroeder says**

I think this book is really good. I never got bored while reading it and it kept me interested in it the whole time.

In the beginning of the book this 16 year old girl Tania is in a class when her school gets bombed. Then she has to carry her friend to the hospital who got badly injured. Tania then got drafted into the army, she was hoping to be a nurse for the army she she could help people. But she was positioned into an anti aircraft unit. She shot down nine German planes in four days. When she went to go meet her commander he thought she would be a good spy and asked her to carry a message to the front lines. She was really nervous but she realized that her dad was over there, so she agreed to help him and delivered the message. The next commander she met thought she would be a very good sniper. Tania now went into sniper training with nine other people. One person was having a lot of trouble so she helped him out and spent a lot of time with him trying to make him a better shot. When she was done with training she was one of the best snipers in the class.

Tania changes a lot during the book, because at the beginning she just wanted to be a nurse and help people. Then she went to shooting down planes then she turned into a spy and finally she is one of Russia's best snipers in the army.

I think this was a good book and I would recommend it to people who like action and fighting. If you don,t like war or violence you should not read this book. I think a lot of younger people would like this book a lot. I think mainly guys would like to read this but girls might also like it.

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### **Carter says**

Personal Response

I liked this book because it had a lot of action in it. At the start of the book Tania was just a normal girl in

school but at school one day the teachers made them go and dig trenches and as they were digging bomber planes came to bomb them. That is when all the stuff went down and all of Tania's class had to get seriously prepared for the war ahead of them. Tania's first position was to shoot missiles at enemy planes. Tania's second job in the war was to be a runner or to take papers from one general to another which is a very dangerous job this section also has a lot of suspense. Tania's last job was to be a sniper which she could hit any target in eye sight.

#### Plot summary

In the book Tania and her friends have to go to war at the start they do not take it seriously and are afraid to kill anyone. But after their first encounter with German planes they get very scared but Tania manages to shoot down 10 German planes before passing out after she recovers she is assigned to a running spot but she doesn't stay in that spot long before she is assigned a sniper she was still afraid to kill Germans until the general showed her the room of all the Germans belongings and encountering her brothers death. From that point on she wants to kill every German in sight.

#### Recommendation

I recommend this book to all genders of middle school and beyond because it has a lot of suspense and the character is a girl but is also about a war.

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### **Brandon says**

This book is about a teenage girl who is driven out of her home in Stalingrad during the German raid, also known as Operation Barbarossa. She had gone to school one day and a military officer walked in. He hand-picked soldiers that look good enough to fight in the war. The others that he didn't pick became anti-aircraft artillery crews, and they were positioned for days. Then once the girl, named Tania, left the artillery, she became a Secret Police member. She didn't hold that position long either, as she was recruited as a sniper on the outskirts of Stalingrad. She arrived at the command post and a man by the name of Vasily Zaitsev recruited and trained her as a Marksman/Sniper. Along the course of the story, she lost many friends and family members, and she plans to avenge the deaths of her comrades. One German at a time.

The storyline was great and the main character was relentless and battle-hardened killer. The book was easy to follow along with, and I never lost interest throughout the book. There's a few spots in the book where I actually decided to research to learn more, mainly about the Stalingrad snipers. This book was altogether a five star worthy book. Excellently written, easy to follow along with, and it can be pictured in my head easily.

The most outstanding character, in my opinion, wasn't even the main character. That character is Vasily Zaitsev, an emotionless and ruthless soldier. Little did I know, he killed 242 German soldiers and officers. That's more officially confirmed than the modern "ultimate" sniper, Chris Kyle, who got 160 confirmed by the Pentagon. Vasily, since this book is nonfiction, is one of the best marksmen in history.

I recommend this book to teenage boys and girls, as the main character is a teenager. It shows a lesson of patriotism, courage, and determination. All things that Americas youth should know. This is a 5 star worthy book. I will probably find myself reading it again.

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### **Amy says**

This book begins with the very grisly details of a sniper doing its job during WWII and the attack of the Germans on Stalingrad, Russia. The very next chapter begins the story of Tania Belov, a 16-year-old girl



who is a very simple student with dreams of becoming a nurse someday at the start of the attack on Stalingrad. When word of the Germans closing in on Stalingrad begins, she and her classmates are first commissioned to try to sandbag around the petrol tanks in hopes of saving them but then Tania is put in charge of an artillery gun and she and two of her classmates shoot down nine German planes in the first attack on the city. Soon after, Tania joins the secret police and is trained to become a sniper. The rest of the book includes descriptions of her work and stories of fighting during the attack on Stalingrad. At the end in an author's note, the reader learns that this book is based on the real-life story of Tania Chernova, who became a woman sniper and in 2002, at the age of 80, recieved the Red Star for bravery from her country.

I thought this book was interesting because you don't usually hear of women snipers. In fact, after I got into the story and realized that the first chapters of the book were really about Tania, I thought to myself, how ironic that I just assumed that that character was male. I would give this book to my female students in a heartbeat. I think they would draw inspiration from it.

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