

On This Day: April 22, 1899

The great Russian and English writer Vladimir Nabokov was born.

April 22, 2019



Vladimir Nabokov

April 22, 1899 - July 2, 1977

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On this day in 1899, the writer Vladimir Nabokov was born in St. Petersburg. His father was a liberal politician; his mother a well-educated and cultured member of a prominent business family. He was the oldest of five children. He received his early education at home with governesses and tutors and then at a liberal private school. He spent long summers at his father's estate, Vyra, about 75 kilometers to the south of St. Petersburg. This is where he developed his passion for entomology, specifically butterflies and moths, which he would pursue throughout his life.

After the abdication of the tsar, Nabokov's father was made Secretary of the Provisional Government. The family, which regarded the 1917 Revolution as a temporary phenomenon, went south to Crimea to wait it out. When Red Army forces approached the peninsula, the family left Russia forever, with a minuscule portion of the family's wealth in the form of jewels sewn in their clothing.

