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King Ludwig's castle: Germany's Neuschwanstein

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Trumbauer, Lisa. *King Ludwig's Castle: Germany's Neuschwanstein*. Bearport, 2005. ISBN 1597160024. \$22.60. 32 pp.

Reviewer: AnnMarie Hamar

Reading Level: Primary

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Ludwig II, King of Bavaria, 1845-1886--Palaces--Germany--Bavaria--Juvenile literature; Schloss Neuschwanstein (Germany)--Juvenile literature; Castles--Juvenile literature; Germany--Juvenile literature; Book--Reviews;

Germany's Neuschwanstein Castle is probably best known as the model for Disneyland's Sleeping Beauty Castle. In reality it was meant to be the dream castle for King Ludwig II of Bavaria. As a boy, Ludwig was fascinated by stories of ancient kingdoms, castles, and brave knights. He was especially intrigued by the story of Lohengrin, a swan that turned into a German prince. When he became King of Bavaria at the age of eighteen, he began work on a palace that was to be larger than his family's summer home of Hohenschwangau. The building of Neuschwanstein became such an obsession for Ludwig that he spent all of his money on its construction and asked other countries to help fund the project. Unfortunately, Ludwig lost his kingdom in 1871, was declared mad by the German government in 1886, and was locked up in Berg Castle where he died two days after his arrest. He never had the opportunity to live in his dream castle.

Trumbauer has visited Neuschwanstein several times and writes as one well-acquainted with the castle and its history. Currently, fifteen of the opulent rooms are open to visitors. The text is minimal but informative with crisply reproduced color photographs and art work for illustrations. Particularly intriguing are photographs showing swan-shaped faucets in the bathrooms and a room designed to look like a cave. The book follows the format of others in the Castle, Palace & Tomb series with a "Just the Facts" section, glossary, and timeline of events at the end of the text. A bibliography and list of useful websites are also included. However, what really stands out is the way Trumbauer has captured the life of a monarch obsessed with castle building.