

Hot Seat Interview



Katarina Zrinska – A Brave Noblewoman

Today, you will step into the shoes of Katarina Zrinska, a strong and educated Croatian noblewoman who lived through war, betrayal, and personal tragedy.

Your task is to interview “Katarina” (one student in the hot seat), using thoughtful and creative questions.

You should NOT just ask:

“When was she born?” or “What did she write?”

Instead, ask questions that explore her thoughts, feelings, and motivations — like a journalist or historian trying to understand her point of view.

Katarina Zrinski (1625–1673) was one of the most remarkable women in Croatian history. Born into the powerful Frankopan family, she later married Petar Zrinski, a key figure in the Zrinski–Frankopan conspiracy against the Habsburg monarchy. Katarina was not only a noblewoman, wife, and mother, but also a poet, linguist, and symbol of Croatian resilience.

She was well-educated, speaking several languages including Latin, German, and Hungarian. Katarina had a deep love for literature, religion, and justice. Her most famous literary work is *Putni tovaruŝ* (Travel Companion), a prayer book written in Croatian, which remains an important example of Baroque literature. Through her writings, Katarina expressed personal grief, spiritual strength, and love for her homeland.

Her life changed dramatically after the failed rebellion led by her husband Petar Zrinski and her brother Fran Krsto Frankopan, who tried to defend Croatian autonomy against the growing power of the Habsburgs. When the conspiracy was discovered, Petar was arrested and later executed in 1671. Katarina was sent to a convent in Graz, Austria, where she spent the last years of her life in sorrow, separated from her children.

Despite personal tragedy, Katarina's legacy is enduring. Her daughter, Jelena, became the Princess of Transylvania, and her son Ivan Antun Zrinski, although imprisoned for most of his life, remained loyal to Croatian ideals. Katarina herself is remembered as a woman of courage, intellect, and emotional depth — someone who lived through political danger with grace and dignity.

Today, Katarina Zrinski stands as a national heroine. Her name is associated with patriotism, cultural pride, and female strength in times of crisis. Schools, streets, and literary prizes in Croatia continue to honour her memory.