

Winner of the *Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for Nonfiction*



# THE FAMILY ROMANOV

MURDER, REBELLION & THE FALL OF IMPERIAL RUSSIA



# INTRODUCTION

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## ***The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion, and the Fall of Imperial Russia***

- o **Genre:** Nonfiction; young adult history
- o **Originally Published:** 2014
- o **Reading Level/Interest:** Lexile 950L; grades 7-10
- o **Structure/Length:** Prologue and 18 chapters; approx. 292 pages; approx. 9 hours, 23 minutes on audio
- o **Central Concern:** In 1894, during great wealth disparity and discontent in Russia, Nicholas II became the last Romanov family member to take the throne. Weaving together primary sources and narrative, the author traces the tragic history of the tsar's reign as his family retreats from the Russian people and revolution brews.
- o **Potential Sensitivity Issues:** Political violence and murder; assassination of a family, including children; antisemitism

## **Candace Fleming, Author**

- o **Bio:** Born in 1962 in Indiana; began writing stories in elementary school; earned her BA from Eastern Illinois University, where she discovered her love of history; taught at the college level before becoming a full-time writer; was inspired to start writing children's books by reading books to her children; has written over 40 books, including picture books, novels, and nonfiction
- o **Other Works:** *The Lincolns: A Scrapbook Look at Abraham and Mary* (2008); *Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart* (2011); *Strongheart: Wonder Dog of the Silver Screen* (2018); *Honeybee: The Busy Life of Apis Mellifera* (2020); *The Rise and Fall of Charles Lindbergh* (2020)
- o **Awards:** *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for Young Adult Literature (2014); *Boston Globe-Horn* Book Award for Nonfiction (2015); NCTE Orbis Pictus Award (2015); YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction (finalist; 2015)

## **CENTRAL THEMES**

- **The Gulf Between Rich and Poor in Turn-of-the-Century Russia**
- **The Damage Caused by Poor Leadership**
- **Revolution and the Russian People's Fight for a Voice**

DURING READING

## READING QUESTIONS & PAIRED TEXTS

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Answer all questions in QIA format on a separate piece of paper. At the end of your answer, **put the page number** on which the answer can be found in parentheses. Title each paper with the green titles above the questions you are answering.

### Prologue-Chapter 4

#### Reading Check

1. Why do the Romanovs host a party?
2. Which member of Nicholas II's family was killed?
3. Who oversees Princess Alix Victoria Helena Louise Beatrice's education?
4. Who do the tsar and tsaritsa agree to canonize in an attempt to birth a son?
5. What disease does Alexei have?
6. What event occurs when peaceful protestors seek justice and protection and are attacked by Russian soldiers?

#### Short Answer

Answer each question in at least 3 complete sentences. Incorporate details from the text to support your response.

1. How are Nicholas and his wife described at the St. Petersburg party?
2. How does the author compare the lifestyles of the Russian nobles to the peasants in Russia?
3. Why does Nicholas II's father reject him?
4. What was the result of Princess Alix's conversion to Russian Orthodoxy?
5. How do the tsar and tsaritsa have a difficult beginning to their reign?
6. What is the impact of improved literacy in Russia?

## Chapters 5-8

### Reading Check

1. Who attacks the protesters after they demand the freedom of political prisoners?
2. Whom is Nicholas II prejudiced against?
3. What is the name of the holy man who appears to spontaneously heal Alexei overnight?
4. What does Prime Minister Peter Stolypin do to Rasputin?

### Short Answer

Answer each question in at least 1 complete sentence. Incorporate details from the text to support your response.

1. How are the children of Alexandra and Nicholas II described?
2. Why does Rasputin develop a bad reputation in Russian society?
3. Why does the tsaritsa become angry with Rasputin?

## Chapters 9-12

### Reading Check

1. What did the woman who stabbed Rasputin believe he was?
2. Why do the people turn against Empress Alexandra?
3. What do leaders in the meeting of the Duma decide to do with Rasputin?
4. What poison does Yusopov give to Rasputin at the dinner party he invited him to?
5. What does Yusopov do when the poison doesn't work?

### Short Answer

Answer each question in at least 1 complete sentence. Incorporate details from the text to support your response.

1. How do the Russians respond when Germany declares war?
2. How do Empress Alexandra and her daughters respond to the war with Germany?
3. What were the assigned roles of the Provisional Government and the soviet?

## Chapters 13-15

### Reading Check

1. What were Alexei and Tatiana ill with shortly before the rebellion?
2. Who protects the royals at the Tsarskoe Selo palace before abandoning their posts later?
3. What governing system is Lenin in favor of when he returns to Russia?
4. Where does Kerensky send the Romanov family due to the violent protests around Tsarskoe Selo?
5. Who takes over when the Provisional Government disappears “with barely a whimper”?
6. What caused Lenin to withdraw from the Great War?

### Short Answer

Answer each question in at least 1 complete sentence. Incorporate details from the text to support your response.

1. Why are the people angered when Nicholas abdicates his throne?
2. Why did the Russian people begin to distrust the Provisional Government?
3. How does Lenin go about setting up his new system of government?

## Chapters 16-18

### Reading Check

1. What does one of Marie’s guards give her?
2. Who is the first officer in charge of the Romanovs in Ekaterinburg?
3. Who does Yurovsky fear will release the Romanovs from their prison?
4. Who ultimately assassinates the Romanov family?
5. What does Yurovsky take with him when he flees the city?
6. Who takes over Russia after Lenin dies?

### Short Answer

Answer each question in at least 1 complete sentence. Incorporate details from the text to support your response.

1. Why does the new government want to give the world the impression that some Romanovs remain alive?
2. How do the conditions of communist Russia fail to live up to the people’s expectations?

# QUESTIONS

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## Multiple Choice

1. What is the author's purpose in comparing the life of the Romanovs with that of others in Russia?
  - A) To compare the happiness of the royals with that of those who suffered
  - B) To describe the attitudes of the wealthy as compared to their poorer citizens
  - C) To ensure the royals' perspectives might be considered
  - D) To emphasize the disproportionate distribution of wealth in Russia
2. What is the impact of increased literacy in Russia at the turn of the century?
  - A) There is a shift in religious attitudes that makes way for Rasputin.
  - B) More citizens realize they are being mistreated.
  - C) The people can now read the goings-on of the palace.
  - D) They can understand the propaganda that is spread about Nicholas.
3. What event causes the Russian people to lose faith in Nicholas II?
  - A) The coronation disaster
  - B) October Manifesto
  - C) Bloody Sunday
  - D) Alexei's weakness
4. What does Philippe's statement, "...you will have another friend like me who will speak to you of God," foreshadow in the book?
  - A) The birth of Alexei
  - B) The Romanovs' rise to sainthood
  - C) The arrival of Rasputin
  - D) The separation of church and state

5. What is the best reason why Nicholas II is considered a poor leader?
  - A) He will not fight with his army in the Great War.
  - B) He turns a blind eye to the suffering of Russian citizens.
  - C) He puts too much stock in what Rasputin wants.
  - D) He is afraid to be the strong leader his father was.
  
6. How does Fleming compare the Romanov children to other children in Russia?
  - A) The Romanovs are not allowed to grow up, while the poor grow up too fast.
  - B) The royal family and the poor have different lifestyles, but there is no visible difference between them.
  - C) The poor are freer to move about because they are not isolated like the Romanovs.
  - D) The royal family suffers the consequences of Nicholas II, while the poor face no accountability.
  
7. Why does Nicholas react with more restrictions when the people of Russia ask for freedom?
  - A) He has no relationship with his people.
  - B) He is given poor guidance from the people around him.
  - C) Empress Alexandra refuses to relinquish control of the country.
  - D) He is attempting to be the ruler his father thought he should be.
  
8. Overall, how might someone characterize Rasputin's efforts on behalf of the royal family?
  - A) Helpful
  - B) Self-serving
  - C) Miraculous
  - D) Enlightened
  
9. What is the most detrimental result of Alexei's disease of hemophilia?
  - A) It causes the royals to isolate themselves from their people.
  - B) It creates tension as people realize there may be no heir.
  - C) The people revolt because they see it as a weakness.
  - D) It causes mistrust between the people and the empire.

10. How does the emperor often respond to difficulties in his empire?
- A) He gives his duties to other leaders.
  - B) He aggressively attacks opposing forces.
  - C) He acts as though difficulties don't exist.
  - D) He asks his counselors for advice.
11. What is the best reason why Rasputin's relationship with the royal family is viewed as problematic?
- A) He is believed to have control of the empire.
  - B) He is frequently drunk and unruly.
  - C) He is not good at predicting outcomes.
  - D) He is known for being a lecher.
12. What was Lenin's motive for moving the Romanov family from their location in Siberia?
- A) He wants to humiliate them further.
  - B) He is afraid the Red Army will assassinate them.
  - C) He does not want them close to the capital city.
  - D) He does not want the Romanovs to escape justice.
13. What is ironic about Lenin's ideal government over the people?
- A) The people are unhappy with the division of land.
  - B) The people are still starving and more restricted than before.
  - C) There is suffering because people work long hours in the factories.
  - D) The nobles are still not forced to work with the peasants.
14. How do the deaths of the Romanov children compare to that of Rasputin?
- A) They are all determined to continue living.
  - B) They are all rumored to have escaped.
  - C) They both seem difficult to kill.
  - D) They die in drastically different ways.

15. What is the most probable reason Nicholas II is cheerful in the final days of his life?

A) He feels unburdened after his responsibilities are removed.

B) He tries to make the most of a bad situation.

C) He does not care much for his people's plight.

D) He is wholly unaware of the difficulties surrounding him.