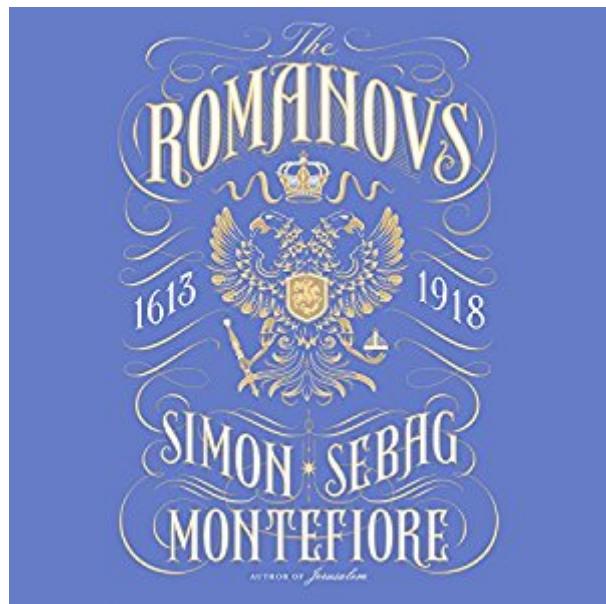


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The Romanovs: 1613-1918



Synopsis

The Romanovs were the most successful dynasty of modern times, ruling a sixth of the world's surface for three centuries. How did one family turn a war-ruined principality into the world's greatest empire? And how did they lose it all? This is the intimate story of 20 tsars and tsarinas, some touched by genius, some by madness, but all inspired by holy autocracy and imperial ambition. Simon Sebag Montefiore's gripping chronicle reveals their secret world of unlimited power and ruthless empire building, overshadowed by palace conspiracy, family rivalries, sexual decadence, and wild extravagance, with a global cast of adventurers, courtesans, revolutionaries, and poets, from Ivan the Terrible to Tolstoy and Pushkin to Bismarck, Lincoln, Queen Victoria, and Lenin. To rule Russia was both imperial-sacred mission and poisoned chalice: Six of the last 12 tsars were murdered. Peter the Great tortured his own son to death while making Russia an empire and dominated his court with a dining club notable for compulsory drunkenness, naked dwarfs, and fancy dress. Catherine the Great overthrew her own husband (who was murdered soon afterward), enjoyed affairs with a series of young male favorites, conquered Ukraine, and fascinated Europe. Paul I was strangled by courtiers backed by his own son, Alexander I, who in turn faced Napoleon's invasion and the burning of Moscow, then went on to take Paris. Alexander II liberated the serfs, survived five assassination attempts, and wrote perhaps the most explicit love letters ever composed by a ruler. The Romanovs climaxes with a fresh, unforgettable portrayal of Nicholas II and Alexandra, the rise and murder of Rasputin, war, and revolution - and the harrowing massacre of the entire family. Dazzlingly entertaining and beautifully written from start to finish, The Romanovs brings these monarchs - male and female, great and flawed, their families and courts - blazingly to life. Drawing on new archival research, Montefiore delivers an enthralling epic of triumph and tragedy, love and murder, encompassing the seminal years 1812, 1914, and 1917, that is both a universal study of power and a portrait of an empire that helps define Russia today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Aside from the insight and incredible (yet useful) detail it provides, the cover looks fantastic. A great read for a Russian history fan, fan of royalty, or a fan of any family drama.

An amazing story of the History of this family. I thoroughly recommend it, Extremely cruel amid such hard times. No wonder they had the Revolution.

This book is great with a lot of pictures and great history. My book also arrived in good shape.

A fascinating account of the dynasty using previously unused/unknown sources, including private diaries, correspondence and archives that give personality to the rulers and their courtiers. Some of the new material is downright salacious, as some tsars felt compelled to describe in detail their sex lives, neuroses and emerging insanity. While sometimes borderline salacious, Montefiore nevertheless uses the sensational material to good historical use to reveal to the reader the inner workings of the Romanovs. Anyone with an interest in Russian history should not overlook this book.

Impressive considering the scope of the work but sometimes that is sometimes it's flaw as it becomes too involved with all the relationships, otherwise, it is an engaging piece of work.

FANTASTIC book that I'd recommend to any history fan! I had never before considered the Romanov dynasty deeply before, but as this detailed book shows, they were a fascinating family with often almost unbelievable stories. It's a long read but that is in this case a positive; the book keeps on giving throughout and I highly recommend it!

This book is a must if you are into Russian history - it tells the story of the Romanovs, since the first one to the fall of the dynasty. It is definitely some heavy reading in some parts - you have to think

that you cannot understand Russia without, at the same time, knowing something of what was happening in Europe and the Middle East. But in general, the prose is fluid, full of details yet not overwhelmingly technical or for the scholar.

Very enjoyable book that presents a biography of each Romanov from Michael - the first - through Nicholas - the last (though his brother got to be Tsar for day). Each one was interesting and a key player in major events - and they come alive in this book. Writing a biography of the family is a bit challenging - you can't present the entire history of Russia in one volume, so what to cut? My view is that Montefiore does a good job of giving the reader a thorough overview of what was happening in Russia and the world at each stage of his book, while keeping the focus on the Tsars themselves with all their quirks and personalities. I would have liked a bit more on Peter the Great and maybe a little less on Nicholas II (almost a third of the book on the hapless last Tsar) and less of Alexander II's sex life (freeing the serfs while doing it with Katya 3 times a day)- but I didn't write the book, did I. Read it, you'll like it.

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