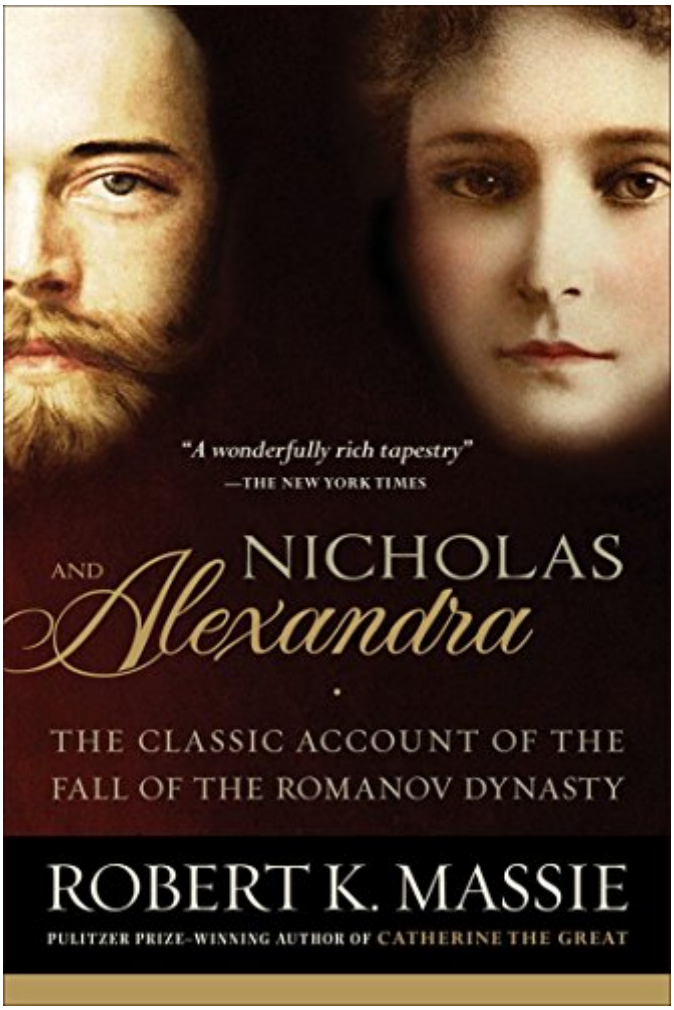
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Nicholas And Alexandra: The Classic Account Of The Fall Of The Romanov Dynasty



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Synopsis

The story of the love that ended an empireIn this commanding book, Pulitzer PrizeÃ¢â ¬â œwinning author Robert K. Massie sweeps readers back to the extraordinary world of Imperial Russia to tell the story of the RomanovsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ lives: NicholasÃ¢â ¬â„¢s political naÃƒÂ vetÃƒÂ©, AlexandraÃ¢â ¬â„¢s obsession with the corrupt mystic Rasputin, and little AlexisÃ¢â ¬â„¢s brave struggle with hemophilia. Against a lavish backdrop of luxury and intrigue, Massie unfolds a powerful drama of passion and historyÃ¢â ¬â •the story of a doomed empire and the death-marked royals who watched it crumble.BONUS: This edition contains an excerpt from Robert K. Massie's Catherine the Great.Ã Â

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As good as it gets when it comes to written history and biography: a true page turner with never a dull moment. And what a cast of characters: Lenin, Kaiser Wilhelm, Rasputin, Trotsky, Queen Victoria, Kings Edward VII & George V, plus the czar, czarina and their 5 ill-fated children. The story is told against the backdrop of WWI, the Russian Revolution and the collapse of monarchy across Europe. I started the book wanting to dislike N&A, given their ill treatment of the Russian peasants.

Instead, I came away feeling genuine pity for them: They truly believed they were chosen by God to rule, and that autocracy was the only appropriate system of government for Russia. Moreover, Nicholas was too young and unprepared when he succeeded his father. Worse yet, his handling of foreign and military matters was simply disastrous: First, he destroys most of the Russian navy in his senseless war with Japanese, motivated by a desire to seize the Korean peninsula (as if Russia needed more land!). And then, his worst mistake: coming to the defense of Serbia after its citizens murdered the heir to the throne of Austria/Hungary. His defense of the undeserving Serbs ("fellow Slavs", he called them) brought Germany into the conflict, followed by the UK, France, etc. Reading this book, you understand how all of Europe carelessly stumbled into an unnecessary world war that killed millions. Of course, hindsight is always 20-20, but if only the czar had been an isolationist, avoided foreign entanglements, and begun a process of political (democratic) and land reform, he might have made it to old age -- along with his wife and children.

When I began my undergraduate studies in 1967, I was already intent on obtaining a "major" in Political Science. I also had an idea that I should obtain a "minor" in English. This was the widely suggested course of study for a student intending to enter law school. (Of course, it was meant that the minor in English should be based largely on writing classes and not on the English literature. That way the young student should learn how to write before he/she gets to law school. However, I really did prefer classes on the plays poems, short stories and novels that in the classes that took on my way through school. So I ended up with an English minor based largely on literature classes rather than a minor bases on writing. I really learned to write only when I entered law school.)I read this book during my early undergraduate days. It had a profound effect on me and made me decide to add another "minor" to my course of study--a minor in History with a main area of concentration in Russian History. This was also my introduction to Robert K. Massie who was an author that I would follow closely. In 1981, during my graduate studies I obtained a copy of Massie’s new book--"Peter the Great." However, I found Massie’s writing of history so enjoyable that I followed him out of the subject of Russian History and into his study of the British navy. In 1992 I obtained a copy of "Dreadnought" and in 2004 I obtained a copy of "Castles of Steel" All of these books I obtained while they were in the hard bound format. Therefore, the books have remained in good shape despite my tendency to go back and read parts of the book as a reference book while reading other books and despite the frequent moving of my entire library that I have experience in my life.

I first became acquainted with this book in high school (almost 40 years ago), when a social studies

teacher with a special interest in Russian Studies made us read it. While it is admittedly probably not at an appropriate level for high school readers (unless advanced), this book remained in the back of my mind all of these decades. I recalled it during my first trip to Russia this summer, and downloaded it to my Kindle. It was a wonderful companion to actually touring the various historical sites where many of these events took place.Russia is a magical place of sorts, filled with gold-domed churches and palaces. While the churches and palaces outlived the imperial monarchy, controlled for well over 100 years by the Romanov dynasty, this history of this bygone era is no less magical. A common cliche that "you can’t make this up, applies to this story.Nicholas II, son of Alexander III, became Tzar of all Russia when the latter died in 1894. Nicholas became engaged and eventually married to a German Princess, Alexandra. While the book covers their courtship, marriage and early life, it really turns interesting during the Russo-Japanese war, and even more so during World War I, when Russia was at war with Germany. Alexandra, despite her origins, was a true Russian patriot, tending to the war wounded in a palace turned military hospital during this war.Despite their inherited ostentatious and flamboyant wealth, the Romanov’s are (I think) accurately portrayed as very kind people, and certainly had their own share of problems (one of which was not money). As only males could inherit the throne, the couple tried to produce a heir, producing three girls on their first three attempts. The third child, Alexis, was a boy, who, tragically inherited the x-linked recessive genetic disease hemophilia. Classic hemophilia is a genetic absence of clotting factor IIX, resulting in minor or even trivial injuries resulting in incapacitating and even life threatening hemorrhage. Massie expounds on this disease, and how it affected the Royal family extensively. By the time the book was written, the condition was treatable by infusion of fresh frozen plasma. Now, the missing factor 8 is supplied by genetic engineering. While reading about the trials and tribulations of Alex’s hemophilia, one cannot help wondering how much of their fortune the Romanov s would have given for supply of genetically engineered factor 8.As World War I ends, the Romanav dynasty faces new revolutionary threats which forced the Tzar to abdicate. While they considering fleeing to exile in England, the U.K. would not have them. They sought refuge in Siberia, where they were eventually arrested and executed by Communists. While substantial detail of these latter events is given in this book, Robert K. Massie authored a subsequent book, expanding on this last part of their lives.While certainly not light reading, it is well worth the effort.

If you like details about political history this is your book. If you like a little more drama, sex and personal information this is not your book. Even though there are details from letters reguarding the tsar and his family and staff, I’m finding it difficult to finish the book. The only reason I will, is

because I want to know how the last few weeks in their lives took place.

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