



# The Court of the Last Tsar: Pomp, Power and Pageantry in the Reign of Nicholas II

*Greg King*

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Praise for The Court of the Last Tsar

"Any book by Greg King is a book to be kept and savored. He has not only given us a fresh, clear-eyed, and often startling new look at the life of the last Romanovs, but also lived up to the promise of his title. He has shown us how the whole enterprise worked, from Tsar Nicholas to his lowest cook and chambermaid. This book is a great work of scholarship--and a wonderful read."

--Peter Kurth, author of *Tsar: The Lost World of Nicholas and Alexandra* and *Anastasia: The Riddle of Anna Anderson*

"A mammoth, monumental achievement. No other book captures the essence and the entire scope of life at the court of Nicholas II. It's a thoroughly enjoyable and encyclopedic masterpiece that will be a major source for historians and biographers for years to come."

--Marlene A. Eilers, author of *Queen Victoria's Descendants* and publisher of *Royal Book News*

"Greg King has truly written a tour de force. The book is extremely well researched, has over 100 illustrations and is, quite simply, marvelous."

--Coryne Hall, author of *Little Mother of Russia, Once a Grand Duchess, and Imperial Dancer*

"Greg King is emerging as one of the leading authorities in today's liveliest field of Russian studies, and this is a major contribution to the study of late Imperial Russia."

--Joseph T. Fuhrmann, author of *Rasputin* and the editor of *The Complete Wartime Correspondence of Tsar Nicholas II and the Empress Alexandra*

## **The Court of the Last Tsar: Pomp, Power and Pageantry in the Reign of Nicholas II** **Details**

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Author : Greg King

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## From Reader Review The Court of the Last Tsar: Pomp, Power and Pageantry in the Reign of Nicholas II for online ebook

### Olishka says

As much as I love this book, Greg King is not a scholar, and total sensationalist and his unfounded charge in the book Sergei molested his foster son is disgusting, and he coming to his from the fact Sergei may have been gay. King conflating the innocence of homosexuality with the absolute evil of pedophilia is absolutely sick. That knocks a star off.

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### Angel Rigsby says

Awesome Book and amazing photographs!

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### Brian Curran says

Greg King seems to have laboured with some difficulty to produce this volume. It is well researched, extensively detailed and taken in small doses quite a useful book, providing detailed information about the daily workings of the palaces and the intricacies of various ceremonies. What it lacked was an editor who could wrangle its scope and ambition into a organised flow to produce a survey of the grand spectacle which was late imperial Russia. Each chapter reads like an essay, somewhat unrelated to the one that came before and often ending with a thud..."and it would all be swept away in the coming storm", or some such nonsense as that. The whole book is a world dancing on a precipice in which we know the ending, we do not need to be reminded every chapter. Also Mr. King tends to give undue weight to gossip and bitter opinions without giving them balance or context. It makes the earlier chapters on the royals somewhat trite and lowers the tone of the book from the start. Mr. King has laid the foundation, some future author will have to come forth and produce the definitive account.

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### MeriBeth says

Greg King's *Court of the Last Tsar* is a detailed accounting of the royal court surrounding the last of the Russian Tsars. King not only details the Imperial family itself but the complex hierarchy of the Household servants and the Courtiers. He explains the interrelationships between the military, religion, and aristocrats and how their isolation from the bulk of the Russian population helped lead to the downfall of Tsarist Russia.

Additionally, King spends time describing in detail the various residences of the Imperial family and their histories, including the Winter Palace, Tsarskoye Selo and Peterhof among others. Other chapters discuss favored possessions including the fabled Faberge eggs and the Imperial Yacht. Finally, King spends several chapters discussing major Romanov events including the controversial coronation events.

For the general reader, this book will likely become tedious and repetitive very quickly. For the Romanov enthusiast, this book is an excellent detailed reference for things off glossed over or briefly mentioned in the more popular biographies, principally the ranks of the servants and courtiers and how they interacted with

the family. A good read in either case and one that I do recommend.

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### **Wurtsboroboy says**

It took me almost a year to finish this but it was well worth it. An excellent history of how the Romanovs lived there lives.

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### **Sylvia says**

One of the least sympathetic books in tone towards the Romanovs. King is half in awe, half slightly disgusted with the excess and the opulence of the Russian Court. A detailed and honest look at the complex world that was the old Russian Court.

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### **Donna Mastroianni says**

Each chapter a different aspect of the court: family, clothes, parties. Meh. I love this stuff, but if you don't already, there's better.

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### **Michael Llewellyn says**

There are numerous books and films about Russia's last tsar, but author Greg King's contribution is exemplary for its detailed behind-the-scenes look at how these people lived, loved and died as the three-centuries-old Romanov dynasty careened toward its last gasp. Thoroughly researched and handsomely illustrated, it details everything from the tsar's daily routines and private family life to the ponderous protocol of funerals, coronations, weddings and imperial balls. Related in a rich, compelling, sometimes gossipy style, the book refreshes old news with colorful anecdotes and personal quotes. Everyone knows the fate of Nicholas and Alexandra and her fanatical attachment to the evil charlatan Rasputin, but it's never been better defended than in this singular quote from the tsar himself: "Better one Rasputin than ten hysterical scenes a day." As for the extravagance of the court itself, by far the most lavish in Europe, this passage is abundantly telling: "(The Grand Duchess) was an imposing presence as she received visitors, the thick fur of a white bearskin at her feet, with the ferocious mouth open and the terrible teeth hanging out, her gown and headdress ablaze with jewels and the long velvet train carpeting the floor behind her. She stood (as) the personification of Russian feminine beauty, enchanting in its touch of barbaric wildness and its tinge of Oriental voluptuousness." All this while coachmen froze to death waiting outside as their noble employers waltzed and swilled vodka in overheated palaces and peasants starved by the millions. Romanov Russia was composed of two wildly disparate, parallel universes, and with their inevitable intersection the world was changed forever. Then again, with Tsar Putin flitting from palace to palace and his billionaire "grand dukes" in place, perhaps nothing has changed at all.

## **Tdempsey says**

Great history. Well written and researched.

I didn't read every single word in every chapter, but got a good solid dose. This is extremely interesting stuff to me.

I learned an interesting tidbit by accident. I had always assumed that Red Square was named that by the Red Communists after they sprang to power at the time they murdered the last tsar and family. But it was called Red Square well before they ever took over!

Anyway - if you have any interest in Russian history, the Romanovs, etc. - check this book out. 5/12

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## **Liz says**

Biography...was one of the recommended books from the "Tragedy at Ekaterineburg" at least I think that's what it was called. I finished it a couple weeks ago. Anyway, this one has a lot of previously unknown/unused info and the author is supposed to be quite good.

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## **Donna Jo Atwood says**

Lots of trivia type info about Russia's royal family up to the Revolution. Includes stuff about the officials and the residences. lots of pictures, appendices, gossip.

Task 25.9

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## **Nancy says**

There's that old playground saying, "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me." Well, Greg King started to fool me the second time, but I finally wised up. Abandoned. In retrospect, it's telling that the "reviews" are all by authors of similar works; I'm sure he returned the favor.

This is shallow and gossipy and patronizing. Affairs and jewels and feuds; so much for the worsening world situation, domestic political upheaval, or the plight of the peasants. As for the patronizing, just as one example: in the introduction, King says that then-rubles translate into US\$10 at the current rate. And yet, each and every time he mentions a figure in rubles, he feels compelled to add a parenthetical translation, e.g. 45 rubles (\$450 in 2005 figures) or 200,000 rubles (\$2,000,000 in 2005 figures), every. single. time. I'm glad of the help, I suppose; that pesky multiplying by ten can trip me up.

This is not absolutely terrible, hence the second star. If you know nothing at all about the end of the Romanovs, you'll become conversant with the players, albeit with King's slant on things. It could be a good beach read. But to paraphrase, after a while, I couldn't pick it up. There's not enough going on here to engage even the semi-serious reader. Read *Nicholas and Alexandra* instead if you haven't.

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### **Brent Benjamin says**

Over the years we have all read books based on the Last Tsar of Russia. Unknown to the family, three hundred years of Romanov rule was coming to an end. Many factors played a role in the demise of such a powerful and influential family, and Greg King bring to light how the power and wealth gained over three centuries allowed the family to retreat and become isolated to what was going on in the "real world".

Part reverence, and part loathing, King takes us behind the pomp of what was once one of the most opulent and rigid royal courts of Europe. Through great detail and description we see what it was like to live through those final decades of Imperial Russia. It will take some time o get through, and there is not a lot going on, however you will have a better understanding of the hopes and fears of a family whose characters were molded during such difficult and modernizing times. it know it's odd to say, but this is a good starting point for those who know little to nothing on the subject.

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### **Belle Meri says**

A decent, if weighty and wordy, volume covering the main players and their roles at court during the reign of Nicholas II. Also includes detailed descriptions of some ceremonials and various imperial residences. A nice enough read, but nothing I'd write home about.

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### **Shane says**

If you enjoy stories about jeweled frocks and crowned heads, with a healthy dose of Russian absolutism mixed in, you'll like this book. I've read many books about the Romanovs, but this is the one that gave me the greatest insight (subject to the author's prejudices) into how they actually lived.

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