



Alexandra: The Last Tsarina

Carolly Erickson

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A czarina Alexandra, mulher de Nicolau II, assombrosamente bonita e melancólica, fiel seguidora de Rasputine, executada, juntamente com toda a sua família, no seguimento da Revolução de Outubro de 1917, mantém-se uma personagem enigmática da história mundial.

Num tom confidente, rico em detalhes, com base em investigação histórica cuidada e enriquecida por uma brilhante imaginação, o relato da vida de Alexandra e da sua sociedade resulta num retrato biográfico tão intenso e difícil de abandonar, quanto é também um envolvente romance. Com esta obra, Alexandra deixa de ser uma figura histórica remota e transforma-se numa personagem de carne e osso

Este livro é afinal um retrato impressionante de Alexandra, a imperatriz que os russos culpam pela queda dos Romanov, a última czarina do Império Russo.

Alexandra: The Last Tsarina Details

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From Reader Review Alexandra: The Last Tsarina for online ebook

Marco Vadalà says

Una discreta introduzione al mondo dei Romanov. La biografia della zarina Alessandra segue i principali eventi della sua vita utilizzando come fonti lettere, diari e altro materiale, nonché pubblicazioni precedenti. Nessuno infamia e nessuna lode, il libro non propone nulla di nuovo. Inoltre, è anche datata in quanto i corpi della granduchessa Maria e del granduca Alessio vengono indicati come ancora scomparsi. Consigliato per chi vuole leggere un primo testo un impegnativo che tratti della fine dello zarismo; non essenziale per chi ha già le basi.

Kecia says

At the tender age of 13 I fell in love with Nicholas and Alexandra and their children reading Readers Digest while baby sitting. This is the best account of Alex's life I have read. Carrolly Erickson's ability to write a biography that reads like fiction is amazing.

Diana says

Devo ammettere che conoscevo pochissimo la storia dei Romanov e che Alessandra non mi ha fatto impazzire come persona, sempre insoddisfatta, depressa, piena di malanni più o meno psicosomatici. Certo non deve essere stato facile vivere in un paese straniero senza veri appoggi familiari, ma se si paragona la sua vita a quella di un qualunque altro abitante russo (e non solo) di quegli anni l'abisso è notevole. In più, leggendo le biografie dei vari sovrani che in un modo o nell'altro sono stati detronizzati nei vari secoli, non può non saltare all'occhio il fatto che tutti hanno ignorato, sottovalutato o peggio finto di non vedere, se non addirittura acuito le situazioni di disagio e miseria in cui versavano i propri sudditi. Quindi certamente spiace per loro, soprattutto quando a rimetterci sono stati anche tanti innocenti, ma la miopia della classe regnante era davvero scandalosa. Detto questo il libro è scritto benissimo, interessante e ben contestualizzato, la vita della zarina è resa appassionante da uno stile piacevole e scorrevole. Quindi lo consiglio sicuramente, anche a chi non fosse particolarmente interessato a questa casata nello specifico.

Belle Meri says

Erickson's biography of the last empress of Russia has its' good points and its bad points. On the one hand, it's a rare book which seems to deliberately show Alexandra's deeply rooted flaws and the mistakes she made as empress. It also is one of the few which flat out states that she likely had some form of mental illness, especially as she grew older. Conversely, there is a distinct lack of dating of events, some are glossed over while others spoken about in detail. And the style of writing is very chatty, more in common with historical fiction than non-fiction. A good book for comparing with other volumes - as you'll find some details here that are not in other biographies of Alexandra - but not a book with which to start your readings into the fall of the Romanovs.

Faten Eassa says

Very interesting and informative. Through Alexandra's life we know about Queen Victoria, Alexandra's life in Germany before her marriage to Prince Nicholas and their life together from the start portaying life in Russia, the birth of their children and the tragedy of her son. We know so many secrets about the Royal Family and the real causes behind the Soviet Russia which so many people should know about. The style is really interesting. Good book.

Anna says

I disliked the writing immensely, it reads too much like historical fiction and at times Erickson cites sources that have been for years known as dubious, if not completely fake, namely Marfa Mouchanow's memoirs. And apparently Erickson knew they were unreliable, and used them anyways - but of course these fabricated memoirs are where the fun and shocking comments come from... It can be amusing and it's an easy read, but absolutely not a good source for true, reliable information on the last Tsarina of Russia. I really regret spending money on it.

Dana Loo says

Ennesima figura tragica e fortemente travisata questa della Zarina Alessandra, principessa d'Assia e nipote della Regina Vittoria, donna bellissima, malinconica, riservata ma, anche determinata, dignitosa, capace di una feroce autodisciplina che affindò durante i suoi anni alla corte russa, dove, mai accettata, per difendersi dalla sua timidezza e soprattutto dai loro pregiudizi, dall'ostilità e dal disprezzo assumeva atteggiamenti glaciali, di totale distacco, a volte anche bizzarri, realizzando, per esempio, vignette satiriche dove ritraeva membri della corte ma anche della famiglia imperiale a lei più vicini.

Innamoratissima del marito Nicola non mancava però di riconoscerli una forte fragilità, insicurezza e incompetenza nell'esercizio di un ruolo così determinante in un Paese come la Russia che necessitava, in quel periodo storico di forti fermenti, di una guida autorevole e solida, tanto che cercò disperatamente di consigliarlo e guidarlo durante i periodi più critici che poi sfociarono nella tragedia finale.

Molte le analogie con la figura di Maria Antonietta: devote entrambe alla famiglia e alla corona, come lei fu accusata di essere una spia, nel suo caso tedesca, insultata e vilipesa, soprattutto durante gli anni della sua vicinanza e dipendenza dall'inquietante Rasputin (furono accusati di essere amanti) come, in precedenza, da altri personaggi ambigui dell'esoterismo. In realtà la coppia imperiale traeva grande conforto da queste dottrine, soprattutto dopo la nascita del tanto agognato erede affetto disgraziatamente da emofilia, causa di indicibili dolori che mettevano a dura prova il suo stato psico-fisico.

Una vita tormentata anche da sofferenze e da malattie che però, nei momenti più critici, riusciva a superare, meravigliando tutti con la forza e la risolutezza con cui affrontava ogni cosa sempre lottando contro le diffidenze dei suoi sudditi.

Capro espiatorio e alla fine martire rimane una figura segnata fatalmente da una fine storicamente tra le più atroci e ingiuste, paradossalmente ad un passo dalla salvezza...

Dominique says

I found this book to be vague when it came to dates; most of the time it was around this time this happened. I

got the impression that the writer had some expectation that the readers of this book already knew a lot of what had happened to the tsarina, so she didn't need to go into detail about what happened at a specific date.

Dawn Tessman says

The story of Alexandra, the last tsarina of Russia, and what was fated for her, her family, and her country. Infinitely tragic.

As a historical account, this book is flawed in the sense that at least one of the sources Erickson used is disreputable (that of Alexandra's maid, Martha Mouchanow) and in that the author, looking to achieve a certain desired effect, makes a conscious decision to end the book, and Alexandra's life, with a single bullet to the head as opposed to describing the horrific melee that actually occurred. Embellishments aside, the Romanovs' story as told from Alexandra's perspective is interesting, making the effort worthwhile, and the blending of a textbook writing style with dialogue obtained from letters and memoirs results in the overall reading experience being similar to that of historical fiction and, therefore, more enjoyable.

(Having some basic background on Russian history before diving into this book would be helpful, as the author does make some assumptions that her audience already possesses certain knowledge.)

Maris says

A devastating story, but completely mesmerizing. Erickson weaves so much of Russian history and culture as she shapes the character of Empress Alexandra. Alexandra herself is complex and tragic, as is the story of her family's fate. An excellent biography.

Chelsea says

A really well written interesting look at one of my favourite historical figures. I would've given it 5 stars but other reviewers have stated that the Mouchanow source is fake. Not sure if it is or not, but one would think that Erickson wouldn't have relied on it quite so heavily for this book if there is any doubt about the validity of the source. Nonetheless, this was an excellent book and from what I know of Alexandra, it seemed accurate.

Madeline says

When it comes to Russian history, my knowledge base is not so much "spotty" as it is "basically nonexistent." I read a biography of Catherine the Great last year, which was the first non-fiction Russian history book I had ever read. *Alexandra: The Last Tsarina* was the second, and before that my only source for information about the Romanovs came from the *Royal Diaries* series (the Anastasia one was really good, though) and one historic fiction book about them that I read in middle school. Add to that a *National Geographic* article that I read back when the Romanov remains had been found and identified, and there you have the entire breadth of my Romanov knowledge prior to reading this book.

So in that sense, I appreciated this book because just about every piece of information presented was new to me, and I was glad to finally learn something real about this doomed family. As the title suggests, Alexandra is the focus of the book - it begins with her childhood when she lost her parents at a young age, then we get a bit about her education and some of her family drama (including her grandmother, Queen Victoria), and then her extended courtship with Nicholas and how she became the empress of Russia. Throughout the book, Erickson describes Nicholas's attempts to rule effectively, Alexandra's increasing unpopularity with the Russian people, the wars and growing discontent, and Alexandra's attempts to control her husband's policies (with the assistance of Rasputin, of course). It's all good information, and the story was able to keep me interested throughout - the last few chapters are especially engrossing, just because of how goddamn *sad* they are. You're reading about the imperial family being held under house arrest, constantly being threatened by their own guards and thinking they'll be killed any second, and then England is like, "Yeah, you guys can totally have asylum here! We're sending a ship next week!" and then the next second the English prime minister realizes that that's actually a really bad idea and that he won't send a ship to rescue the family, but no one tells *them* that, and then their guards are all, "We're going to Siberia now, where you'll be safe!" and you're just staring at the pages thinking *oh god, oh god, oh god* because you know how this story ends. So, to the unformed eye, this seems like a really good, solid biography of a much-maligned woman.

Here's the problem: Carolly Erickson is a terrible historian. One of her sources used in this book is the memoirs of Martha Mouchanov, a former lady-in-waiting of Alexandra. She provides a lot of personal details about the empress's state of mind and the inner workings of the palace, and it seems like a great primary source. Unfortunately, as other reviews have informed me, not only are Mouchanov's memoirs completely fabricated, but this was known *before this book was written*. So Erickson took an unreliable source and presented it as reliable, because it helped her case of presenting Alexandra as a more sympathetic figure.

Similarly, Erickson will frequently make a statement about Alexandra's thought process or emotions at a certain time, with no actual evidence to back it up, and you get the sense that she's just projecting her own emotions onto Alexandra. There's no in-depth examination of *why* Alexandra thought that she was the most qualified person to rule Russia, Erickson merely tells us that Alexandra thought she could rule better than her husband and moves on. There's really no critical analysis of anyone here - Rasputin, clearly the most enigmatic and fascinating figure in this whole fiasco, is examined only at surface level. Was he playing a long con on Alexandra, trying to manipulate her into destroying the country? Why did he begin by refusing large gifts of money and titles and later get greedier and more demanding? Did he really believe that he was a holy man and a healer, or was he an imposter all along? And most importantly, how was he able to miraculously heal Alexei when no one else could? I realize that these questions haven't been given definite answers, but a little *acknowledgement* of them would have been nice.

There's no definite closure to the story - it ends with the Romanov's execution (spoiler alert!) and then a stupid epilogue about Alexandra's body being properly interred in 1998. Between those two events, there's nothing: how the Romanov's bodies were disposed of and hidden, how they were discovered, who was identified and who's still missing and why, not even any information about what happened to the rest of the extended family. It felt unfinished and unsatisfying.

This book shouldn't have been nonfiction. Erickson should have just admitted defeat and written a historic fiction novel about Alexandra, because that's basically what she's done anyway - even the writing feels like overwrought fiction, like this passage: "The warm June sun continued to shine down over the domes and rooftops of Moscow, but now it was a city in mourning, and the crows, bloated and sated, floated like dark wraiths in the cloudless blue sky." And this line, which was so ridiculous that it's the only passage in the entire book that I made sure to mark so I could quote it later: "A new order was coming slowly and painfully to birth, forced into the light by the harsh midwife of revolution."

By the way, "Harsh Midwife of Revolution" is the name of my new metal band. We're not very good.

One last thing, and then I'll put this book out of its misery: Erikson, for some god-unknown reason, insists on calling Alexandra and Nicholas "Alix" and "Nicky" throughout the book. Maybe this is acceptable among Romanov biographers, but it felt jarringly personal to me - imagine reading a Tudor biography that referred to Henry VIII as "Harry."

Maybe this book would have succeeded as a historical novel, but as straightforward history, it's a disaster.

Elgyn says

Po pravd? - nejsem si úpln? jistá historickou p?esností, chybí bibliografie (i když v originále asi je), ale je ?tivá.

Alexandra roky milovala Mikuláše II. a radši by z?stala na ocet, ale nikoho jiného si prost? nevezme. A pak když ji požádá o ruku, tak ?eší, že nem?že p?estoupit na jeho víru. To jí to za ty roky nedošlo?

s. 63

Nicky si byl dob?e v?dom také toho, že by otec mnohem rad?ji p?edal svou vládu milovanému synu Michailovi než jemu, jenž m?l tu sm?lu, že byl prvorozený. Michail ještě? nebyl dosp?lý, ale podle cara on jediný ze t?í carských syn? (...). Nicky byl p?íliš mírný (...), t?etí syn, Georgij, byl sice chytrý, ale též povrchní a postrádal vážnost nutnou pro autoritu cara.

Tohle je matoucí formulace, protože „t?etí syn Georgij“ byl v nástupnictví druhý, p?ed Michailem.

s. 167

V noci na 17. ?íjna (podle nového kalendá?e 27. ?íjna) 1905

Není po roce 1900 rozdíl mezi gregoriánským a juliánským kalendá?em 13 dní?

s. 15 *p?idala ke svým ?erným šat?m dlouho bílou vle?ku*

s. 237 *pov?ila*

s. 269 *opírala se jednou rukou u lavici*

s. 288 *na rukou a nohu*

ji/jí - s. 32

Nikki says

(in 2008)

My Thoughts:

I thought the book was fantastic. I've had a few experiences with reading bland biographies. The author does a great job making this accessible and readable. It felt like reading a novel rather than a biography. She did a fantastic amount of research but also brought real emotion into the characters. I thought it was great, I've never even had a huge interest in tsarist Russia, but I could definitely get into it if there are more books were this interesting! If I had to list a downside it was that it was a little overly melodramatic, but as far as I know, that is how they all are because that is how these people were. It made you overly sympathetic with the Tsarina and her family, but I felt it was more like reading a personal diary (emotion and circumstance wise) and wasn't really meant to focus on the whole big picture, you have to do more research to figure all that out. It was more 'through her eyes' and in that sense I felt it was okay to occasionally be melodramatic or biased and not focus on analyzing her actions. That is my argument against some of the reviews about the book I read on Amazon. My greenness in the area could be affecting my opinion though, be forewarned. Definitely

made learning some history enjoyable. Definitely recommended, if you can get past the weirdness and general incompetence of most royal families, lol. I plan on reading more about the Romanovs, I've developed an interest in Russian history (which is why I picked up this book in the first place). Perhaps I'll read more throughout the year and possibly re-evaluate this one.

A. King says

This is a text that I would certainly call readable, but it veers slightly into the realm of historical *fiction*. Why? Because there are several fatal errors that this text makes.

1. The issue of Martha Mouchanow. Her memoirs have been CONTINUOUSLY discredited. The fact that Erickson uses them at all is solely to make the novel juicier to modern audiences and those not interested in reading a fact-based text.

2. Alexei's hemophilia. I'm sorry, but it was this that nearly made me put the book down. The Russian populace **did not know that Alexei suffered from hemophilia**. They didn't find this out until much later. The Romanovs tried very hard to cover this over.

Now, this is a fun read, it makes Alexandra sympathetic, even though there are points in history where Alexandra isn't as sympathetic as the text makes her.

2 stars for strong inaccuracies.
