

Luiza Salazar  
7788890033 – [luiza.salazar1@gmail.com](mailto:luiza.salazar1@gmail.com)

***The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion, and the Fall of Imperial Russia* by  
Candace Fleming**  
Schwartz & Wade (July 2014)

Real life is often stranger than fiction. And in the case of the Romanovs, it is definitely more interesting. In *The Family Romanov*, Candace Fleming takes the reader back to the beginning of the end for one of the most powerful families in history, a dynasty that lasted over three hundred years and ended in tragedy. From the death of Tsar Alexander III to his son's Nicholas' rise to power, downfall and the execution of his family, Fleming paints a detailed and interesting picture of the events that led to the end of the autocratic regime in Russia.

Engaging any audience in history can often be a daunting task. Engaging a teenage audience, so used to the flair, excitement and immediacy of television, film and more adventurous books is a near impossible challenge, but one that Candace Fleming rises to with incredible skill. The author paints a beautiful, vivid picture of glittering palaces, snow covered gardens and silk dresses while seamlessly transitioning to the much less glamorous villages and neighborhoods of peasants in Tsarist Russia. Even knowing the outcome of all that is being set up is not enough to dim the tension she manages to build for the Romanov family and the readers soon find themselves taking sides, rooting for this or that character as if they hadn't already lived and died in our world.

The writing is elegant and simple, flowing in a nice rhythm to engage the audience who can't help but flip pages in the hopes that history might turn out different. Far from a superficial look into these legendary figures' lives, Fleming analyzes and presents them from all angles, their flaws, strengths, reasonings, triumphs and mistakes. The challenges and doubts faced by each player in the story feel extremely familiar even when it all took place over a hundred years ago thousands of miles away. The book is clearly well researched and the way that the author organizes each section - focusing on personal letters and details of the intimate lives not just of the Romanovs, but of major players like Rasputin, Lenin and even Stalin - enrich the reading experience and elevate it from just a retelling of historical events to a deeper, emotional look at what drives people in times of despair.

Political, smart and spectacularly descriptive, *The Family Romanov* is a must-read for history buffs – and a great way to turn those more reluctant on the subject all the way around.