

Russka: The Novel of Russia Study Guide

Russka: The Novel of Russia by Edward Rutherford

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Plot Summary

Russka, by Edward Rutherford, is the story of eighteen hundred years of Russian history. He includes the story of the history of the people and the country along with the politics and culture. The focal point of the book is the small village of Russka, located in the Russian heartland, from its beginnings until modern times. Most of the main characters, such as the Bobrovs, Suvorins, Karpenkos and Romanovs trace their roots to the small village, even though they move around the country.

The book begins in primitive times with a small group of families living in huts. There are different tribes, with the Alans being the greatest of the warriors. These people become the leaders of Kiev and other cities. Their structure of government is based on succession passing from brother to brother and not from father to son. The result is a great deal of instability. The fact that there is no one strong central authority makes the country of Ru's susceptible to takeover from the outside. This is how the Mongols or Tatars are able to conquer the country in these years in the thirteenth century. The peasant woman Yanka flees from the Tatars. She is the ancestor of the Ivanovs.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, Moscow has become a strong city with a tsar that has conquered other cities. Tsar Ivan is fighting to throw out the Tatars, but the Tatars have a working relationship with the landowners and merchants, which make this a difficult task. Boris Bobrov, a young landowner, is a strong supporter of the tsar. The Cossacks are instrumental in the fight against the Tatars. One of them is Andrei Karpenko.

As the village of Russka develops over the years, an industrious serf, named Ivan Suvorin, begins a cloth business in the nineteenth century. The Suvorins have problems with the landowning Bobrovs over the years, but their cloth factories are very successful. The Suvorins finally gain their freedom from the Bobrovs and become very wealthy industrialists. At the time of the revolution, Vladimir is one of the wealthiest men in Russia.

Throughout Russian history, the peasants were an oppressed class. Even though the laws changed regarding their status, they remain oppressed, yet when the revolution begins, it takes place in St. Petersburg and Moscow and not in the countryside.

Russka looks at the development of the country and the interaction of these four families and how they cope with the various situations. There are conspiracies, murders and romance over the years. During the revolution, Nicolai Bobrov is a member of the дума. When he becomes suspect by the Cheka, Vladimir Suvorin, who loses all of his wealth, helps him escape to Finland and soon follows. After the fall of the Soviet regime, two men meet at a trade fair. When Paul Bobrov travels to Moscow, he and Sergei Romanov visit the village of Russka.

The reader will enjoy this lengthy book. It is written in a style that results in quick and easy reading and will hold the reader's interest.



Chapters 1-2, pgs. 1-68

Chapters 1-2, pgs. 1-68 Summary

Russka, by Edward Rutherford, is the story of eighteen hundred years of Russian history. Rutherford tells the story of the history of the people and the country along with the politics and culture. The focal point of the book is the small village of Russka, located in the Russian heartland, examined from its beginnings until modern times. Most of the main characters, such as the Bobrovs, Suvorins, Karpenkos and Romanovs, trace their roots to the small village, even though they move around the country.

In 180 A.D., three families inhabit the steppe in the land that would be known as Russia in the future. Lebed and her five-year-old son, Kiy, sleep in a hut with ten other people. The area they live in is unknown to the rest of the ancient world. Little Kiy goes outside and sees his Uncle Mal and wants to know if he captured the bear cub. Mal tells him the cub is in the forest.

The boy is wandering through the forest, looking for the bear cub. Lebed wanders through the forest looking and calling for her son. She finds Little Kiy at the camp of the horsemen. She hears them say they will go to the village. The men are Alans, the greatest of the Sarmatian tribes. They had fought as mercenaries for Rome. The leader tells them that they will not raid the village.

Lebed approaches the group. She knows the Alans take young boys and raise them as warriors of their clan. Little Kiy calls out to her as the group rides away. The Alan who had recently lost a son rides back and gives Little Kiy to his mother. Lebed returns to the village and tells them about the horsemen.

Chapter two takes place in the year 1066, the year a comet appears in the sky. Russia now exists, with Kiev as its capital. The land is Christian. Ivan is twelve years of age. He is staring at a Red Star in the sky. His father Igor is trying to negotiate a marriage for him but is not successful. His business partner does not want Ivan in his trade caravan, so Igor decides on a religious life for Ivan. Igor takes Ivan to the monastery to see Father Luke. Ivan suddenly realizes that his father has chosen a religious life for him. Father Luke decides that Ivan should not become a priest.

Chapters 1-2, pgs. 1-68 Analysis

The book begins in ancient times in the year 180 A.D. The country of Russia does not yet exist, but the area around what would become Kiev is inhabited by various tribes. One of these tribes is the Alans, which are the greatest of the warrior tribes. They raid villages and take young boys to become warriors in their tribe, a fate Little Kiy is saved from.



Many years later, the descendants of the tribe of Alan are the leaders of Kiev and lesser cities. Igor is one of the descendants and a member of the druzhina of the Prince of Kiev and is also a leading merchant of the city. As is the custom, he must decide the future of his son Ivan, who is twelve years old. The son does not have much say in the matter and must abide by the decision of the father. When Igor's attempts at negotiating a betrothal and securing Ivan a place in a trade caravan fail, he considers a religious life for the boy. Luckily for Ivan, Father Luke decides that he should not be a priest.



Chapter 2, pgs. 68 - 130

Chapter 2, pgs. 68 - 130 Summary

The political system in effect in 1067 is based on succession from brother to brother, and this resulted in problems. There is a revolt by the Prince of Polotsk that has Ivan worried for his father's safety, since his father and brothers ride with the Prince of Kiev to quell the revolt. When his father returns, Ivan learns that his father has arranged for him to be a page to Vladimir, the son of Prince Vsevolod. Ivan's brothers are bitter and jealous because Ivan will be entitled to the same inheritance as they are.

One of his father's grooms finds Ivan as the Prince of Polotsk is freed from prison. The groom takes Ivan to the house of Zhydovyn the Khazar, who will hide him until they can smuggle him out of the city. He rejoins his family a month later. His father switches his allegiance to Prince Vsevolod, but Ivan does not receive the call to serve Vladimir. They are now living in Pereiaslav in 1021 and Igor continues to try to find a place for him.

One day, four years after his visit to the monastery, Ivan tells his parents that he wants to be a monk. His father sends him to a monastery in Greece. Ivan leaves in two boats that are attacked by the Cumins. They take refuge at Russka. Ivan meets the peasant Shchek, who stole the beaver furs and who leaves Russka the next day on foot.

In 1075, Ivan's parents know that he is missing. He never arrived in Constantinople. Three years pass without any word from him. Ivan wandered around gambling and stealing. He even stole from Zhydovyn.

One day Ivan comes upon a group of men about to be sold into slavery. The peasant Schek is in the group, and he and Ivan recognize each another. Ivan gives him the money to buy his freedom. Ivan is captured by the men of his brother Sviatopolk, who orders him to be put in prison, but they meet their father on the way. In this way, his life is spared.

His father says he will have his place with Prince Vladimir, now called Monomakh. Igor decides to give his sons half the income from his estates. Ivan understands the jealousy and hatred of his brother and decides to give up his share, but Shchek tells him to ask for Russka. Shchek knows of the honey forest there.

The prince's ward, Emma, chooses Ivan to be her husband from among four suitors. She becomes pregnant in a few months.

At this time, Sviatopolk is deeply in debt and knows that his half of his father's estate will not cover his debts. He disguises himself as a Cumin and tries to kill Ivan, who recognizes him. The next day, Ivan saves him from drowning and tells him he should have asked for help with his debts.



Chapter 2, pgs. 68 - 130 Analysis

Ivan does not know what to do with his life. When his father arranges for him to be a page to Prince Vladimir, the result is intense jealousy from his brother, Sviatopolk, which continues for many years. Ivan eventually becomes wealthier and more successful than his brother, thanks to the peasant Shchek. Ivan had helped Shchek buy his freedom from slavery and Shchek repays him by telling him not to renounce his father's inheritance but to ask for Russka. Shchek knew the secret of the honey forest. Sviatopolk tries to have Ivan killed the first time when his men capture him, but they meet their father. Igor forgives Ivan for his disappearance. In the campaign against the Cumins in 1111, Sviatopolk is deeply in debt and tries to kill Ivan by disguising himself as a Cumin. Ivan recognizes him. The next day, Ivan saves his brother from drowning and tells him he had only to ask for help with this debt. Ivan forgives his brother as Igor had forgiven Ivan. Ivan's wanderings taught Ivan the value of family and remain in Ivan's service.



Chapters 2-3, pgs. 131-105

Chapters 2-3, pgs. 131-105 Summary

In 1113, there is a great deal of corruption in the Russian government. People are in debt and are sold as slaves with the government ignoring the situation. The abuses continue until the Prince of Kiev dies in 1113. The next day the veche, or assembly, meet without being called. They offer the throne to Monomakh, who refuses. The result is a revolution.

Ivan rides into town as the revolution begins. Sviatopolk is killed in the revolt, but Ivan manages to keep Khydovyn safe. He and Zhydovyn discuss the political situation and the rule of succession. A few days later, Monomakh agrees to rule.

In chapter three, it is 1237 and Mengu, who is a Mongol warrior, is riding in a camel train with his wife and child. He and the huge army are in the service of the Great Khan and are planning to conquer the Rus. All of the Mongol clans are united under Genghis Khan. Their goal is to rule the world.

Mengu serves Batu Khan, a grandson of the Genghis. They believed they could conquer the Rus in three years since the state of Rus is disunited.

Yanka is seven years old and lives in Russka. She is a descendant of Shchek. She goes out for a walk one morning. From a distance, she is seen by Mengu. Yanka is home alone when the Mongols attack. Most of the villages flee.

Her mother is killed by Mengu. Yanka is dropped at her father's sleigh. Mengu turns his attention to the fort, which is easily entered. They kill everyone in the fort and then burn the fort and the church.

In 1246, Yanka's family and some of the surviving villages travel along the river. They are trying to escape the Mongols, or Tatars, who now control Russia. They reach the Oka River. To the north is a small town called Moscow. They go to the boyar Milei at Murom where there is a village called the northern Russka. Most of the people are Slavs and Finns.

Yanka is now a young woman and becomes involved in an incestuous relationship with her father.

Milei visits the village of Russka. He returns a month later and Yanka feels his eyes on her. She asks him to take her to Novgorod. He agrees and she shares his tent on the trip.

Yanka is impressed with Novgorod and is happy there. She listens to the men talk politics and how there will be a battle between Prince Alexander of Novgorod and his



brother Andrei. She is shocked to learn that Milei favors cooperation with the Tatars. The Tatars had killed her mother.

Chapters 2-3, pgs. 131-105 Analysis

The political structure of the Rus makes the country susceptible to conquering. There is no unity among the ruling princes. They each rule their own area without any strong national ruler. This is why a strong entity like the Tatars will easily be able to conquer the Rus in a three year period. The conquering Tatars set up a commercial system that made commerce easy and profitable for many of the Rus. This is why many Rus like Milei favored cooperation with the Tatars.

Yanka has had a hard life. She sees her mother killed by the Tatars when she is seven years of age. Her brother is taken away by the Tatars to be an artisan for the Khan. She has an incestuous relationship with her father. Yanka becomes the mistress of the boyar Milei to go to Novgorod where she learns that he favors cooperation with the Tatars. When she hears this, it brings up memories of the slaying of her mother.



Chapters 3-5, pgs. 195 - 258

Chapters 3-5, pgs. 195 - 258 Summary

Yanka discovers that she is pregnant. Yanka decides to abort her pregnancy and finds a woman in the marketplace for this purpose. She now wonders about her future until she meets a Mordvinian slave named Purgas. Milei arranges the marriage and they leave with him for the Black Lands where they will live.

In 1262, the Tatars are in the Northeast part of Rus, even though the princes are allowed to continue their rule. Prince Alexander has befriended the Tatars, and on this day Milei is awaiting the arrival of the Tatar, Peter. Peter is a Christian and allows his daughter to marry Milei's youngest son, David. Peter builds a monastery north of Dirty Place.

Purgas is elected elder of Dirty Place. One day when Yanka is out for a walk, she sees Peter, who is Mengu, the Tatar with the missing ear who killed her mother. She takes the bow and arrow from his horse and shoots him. Purgas arrives and strangles Peter and kills the horse. They cut up the bodies and burn the pieces.

Two weeks later, Melei returns to Dirty Places and learns that Peter is missing. Melei lies about having sold Peter any land. The following spring, the Boyar begins experiencing excruciating pains in his chest and feet whenever he leaves his house. Purgas had buried the head of Peter by the boyar's door. Melei gives the land to the priest and builds a monastery on it. The monastery is dedicated to the Saints Peter and Paul.

In chapter four, the year is 1454 and the small monastery has a rich collection of icons painted by Father Stephen. He is a distant relative of Yanka, as is Sebastian.

Chapter five begins in the year 1552. The Russians conquer the Tatar city of Kazan and the ships are returning on the Volga River. Boris Bobrov is sixteen years of age at the time and watching. Moscow has conquered many cities and is becoming very strong. Unlike the past, Moscow believes in a strong central authority. Boris supports Ivan because Ivan is breaking the power of the mighty clans, which allows lesser families to prosper. Boris's family has suffered from the hands of the Tatars. Boris is from Russka.

Boris travels with the tsar to Moscow, which is already a city about the size of London. After a month, he marries the daughter of Dimitri Ivanov, Elena. Two weeks after the wedding, Boris and Elena visit Russka. Word of Elana's small dowry reaches the villages before they arrive.



Chapters 3-5, pgs. 195 - 258 Analysis

Yanka, who watched her mother slain by Mengu, who became known as Peter the Tatar, never forgets the man with one ear. She exacts her revenge on him many years later when she and her husband, Purgas, kill him. She is famous among the later generations for killing Peter the Tatar.

By the mid-fifteen hundreds, the shape of the Russian government structure is changing. Moscow has grown from a small town to one of the major European cities. Moscow, under the rule of Tsar Ivan, has conquered other cities. The structure of government is shifting to one of a strong central authority. After three hundred years of Tatar rule, Ivan is breaking the power of the strong clans that associated with the Tatars, enabling them to sustain their rule. The Tatars are being thrown out of Russia.



Chapter 5, pgs. 258 - 319

Chapter 5, pgs. 258 - 319 Summary

Boris inspects his estate. His income does not cover his expenses. He will be in debt unless he receives some favor from the tsar. The only thing he can do is to increase the tax burden on the peasants.

Boris and Elena are in Moscow. The tsar has recovered from his illness. In July, Elena says she is pregnant and Boris is happy. Elena spends most of their time with her family. Stephen, the priest from Russka, visits and tells him some of the peasants are leaving because of the heavy tax burden. The monastery will help the peasants if the tax burden isn't relieved.

In November, back in Russka, two visitors arrive from Moscow. The priest from Moscow wanted to see the icons at the monastery, so Boris made the arrangements with Stephen. Heresy trials are taking place in Moscow and the priest says that some of the icons are heretical. Boris can prosecute Stephen and Daniel. As a result, the icons are altered and Boris receives another loan from Lev. The peasants who thought of leaving could not now leave.

That winter while Boris is on an expedition to Kazan, Elena gives birth to a daughter.

In 1564, Ivan divides his realm keeping part of it, including Moscow, as his personal fief and rules it as a police state as was Russka. It is known as the Oprichnina. Boris, who is accepted into the Oprichnini, goes to Russka to talk to Elena.

A plot against Ivan terminates the campaign against the Baltic. The Oprichnina kills many of those whose names are on a list, including Dimitri. This is one of numerous purges.

Chapter 5, pgs. 258 - 319 Analysis

Boris is dedicated to the service of Tsar Ivan but continually looks for ways to improve his position. He is devious in achieving what he wants, always trying to make himself look important. When the priests at the monastery pressure him to lower taxes or they will help peasants like Mikhail leave, he has priests from Moscow find some of their icons to be heresy. He also turns against his father-in-law, Dimitri, saying he was opposed to Tsar Ivan. This eventually led to the man's death in a purge. He accuses his wife of having an affair with a priest and then rapes her. He is becoming irrational and warped by the power he has in the Oprichnini.



Chapters 5-6, pgs. 319 - 391

Chapters 5-6, pgs. 319 - 391 Summary

A large force marches on Novgorod and Pskov, who were thought to be joining the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania. While Boris is away with the campaign, Elena gives birth to a son, Feodor.

When Boris returns, he is not sure if Elena's baby is his. While he wonders what to do, Ivan arrives. Boris watches as the tsar goes to the monastery to talk to the abbot. Ivan feels that they tried to swindle him out of some land. Boris mentions that one of the monks is guilty of heresy. Stephen is executed. When Boris says he doesn't believe that Feodor is his child, Ivan kills the boy.

The Oprichnina ended in 1572.

The year is 1647 in chapter six. Andrei Karpenko rides to his father's farm in Russka. Andrei's dream is to ride with the Cossacks. Russka is now a part of the Ukraine and ruled by Poland. A Polish official, Stanislaus, arrives at the farm and tells Ostap, Andrei's father, that they are taking the farm and that Ostap will work for a man named Mordecai, who holds the lease. After they leave, the family decides that Andrei will join the Cossack campaign against the Poles.

The Cossacks are victorious against the Poles and Andrei and his friend Stephan are both rich from the looting. The Cossack victory caused the people of the Ukraine to revolt against the Poles. Andrei and a group are sent to Russka to spy on the Polish magnate Vychnevetsky.

The Tatars had preceded Andrei's party and killed many Poles. At Russka, they find the Poles locked in the fort. Posing as Poles, the Cossacks enter the fort. While they do this, the villagers begin killing Jews. In 1649, the Poles agreed to let the Cossacks have their own state within Poland. It was not the freedom that the Cossacks wanted.

In 1653, Andrei is sent on a mission to see the tsar and deliver letters. In Moscow, Andrei meets Nikita Bobrov, the son of Elena. Nikita tells Andrei that the Cossacks best friend is the Moscow Patriarch Nikon.

Chapters 5-6, pgs. 319 - 391 Analysis

This section further explains why the tsar is known as Ivan the Terrible. Boris is a member of the dreaded Oprichnina and uses his position to extract revenge against those who he feels have wronged him. When Elena gives birth to a son, Boris feels that the priest Stephen is the father. He uses this position with the tsar to have both the priest and the baby killed. Boris uses his position to strike out at people who he feels have wronged him in some way.



In the mid sixteen hundreds, the Poles control the Ukraine. They extract all they can from the peasants and use the Jews as collection agents, which make them hated. Andrei Karpenko is a Cossack who takes part in the rebellion against the Poles. The Ukraine gains some concessions from the Poles but isn't strong enough to gain the freedom that they desire. The Cossacks of the Ukraine turn to the tsar of Moscow for help.



Chapters 6-7, pgs. 391 - 455

Chapters 6-7, pgs. 391 - 455 Summary

Andrei notices that Nikita's servant girl resembles Anna. The next day he talks to the servant girl, named Maryushka, who had married the steward in Russka. Andrei begins an affair with the girl, whose husband is in Russka. Under Russian law, the peasant is not free to leave the master.

During Bright Week, the week after Easter, the Cossacks meet with Patriarch Nikon, who gives them his support.

When Maryushka and her husband return to Russka, Andrei accompanies them. Nikita says he is welcome to visit his estate and Andrei stays at his house. Andrei learns that he has relatives in Dirty Place. Maryushka is pregnant but Andrei won't take her with him when he leaves.

It is the late seventeenth century in chapter seven. The reforms of the Patriarch Nikon began in 1653. He was exiled by Tsar Alexis when he suggested the Church should have authority over the tsar. The result is a group of dissidents called the Schism.

In 1670, the village of Russka knows that the rebels led by Stenka Razin are coming. There is a sixteen-year-old girl named Arina who is the daughter of Maryushka. She knows that her father is a Cossack. Her mother had run off because of continual beatings by the steward.

Stenka Razin is the leader of the poor Cossacks and operated in the lands between the Volga and the Don. He leads a huge rebel army. The people of Russka think he is Arina's father. The tsar's armies crush the rebels and execute Razin.

In 1654, Nikita arranges for Andrei to be part of the Muscovite army. The tsar gives him an estate for his service. The estate is in Little Russia, the area that the Ukraine is in. On the way he stops at Russka. He doesn't see Arina but leaves money and a bracelet for her.

In 1677, at the age of twenty-three, Arina has joined the schism, or Raskolniki. One of the local priests had come into contact with the reform movement when he was at the seminary.

In 1684, Nikita has a quarrel with Tolstoy that makes him out of favor with the Romanovs. His wife, Eudokia Petrovna, is a Raskolniki sympathizer. Many prominent ladies are. Tolstoy had warned Nikita about his wife's sympathies.

In 1682, nine-year-old Peter and his mother become joint tsars. Princess Sophia is regent. Nikita is summoned to the palace by Prince Basil. Golitsyn tells him that there are no chances for his advancement because of his wife's involvement with the



Raskolniki. Eudokia arranges for their son Procopy to work in Peter's service, and she and Nikita return to Russka.

Arina marries Daniel, the carpenter and icon painter. Her grandmother gives her a bracelet on her wedding day. They use the names Petrovich and Ivanov.

In 1684, the Raskolniki are outlawed. It is then that Arina learns that Daniel fought with Stenka Razin. His name used to be Stepan. They have a daughter named Maryushka.

In 1698, Procopy is thirty-one years old and a member of the Preobrazhensky Guards of Peter the tsar. Peter returns to Moscow as the sole tsar. Procopy is with him.

Chapters 6-7, pgs. 391 - 455 Analysis

Andrei visits the other Russka, the one that Yanka had escaped from many years earlier, and meets his distant relatives. The girl Maryushka is pregnant and wants to go to the Ukraine with him, but he refuses. He is a Cossack and has campaigns to fight. He never sees his daughter Arina.

The reforms of the Patriarch Nikon result in a group of dissidents known as the Schism or Raskolniki. When the movement is outlawed, its followers practice in secret.

Daniel is the Stepan who becomes friends with Andrei in the Cossack campaign against the Poles. Neither of them knows that Andrei is Arina's father. Both are followers of the Raskolniki. Nikita's chances for advancement are ruined by his wife's sympathies with the dissidents. They return to Russka and become friends with Daniel and Arina.



Chapters 7-8, pgs. 455 - 518

Chapters 7-8, pgs. 455 - 518 Summary

Procopy is present at the interrogation of many soldiers involved in a mutiny. He is part of the secret police bureau. While in Moscow, Eudokia, Daniel and Arina continue to attend Raskolniki services while the public executions continue for months.

Tsar Peter issues many edicts. The mutiny, or streltsy, has been crushed. Peter is impressed with European ways and wants to change Russia and try bring it out of its backwardness. Procopy explains this to his father.

In 1703, Andrei is traveling to Moscow. He has learned that Nikita is still alive. He has been prosperous and has three children. His son Pavlo is already a Cossack in good standing with Ivan Mazeppa, the ruler of the left bank. Andrei is surprised at the changes in Moscow.

In Russka, the steward and abbot die and are replaced. The abbot is removed by the authorities. Daniel is accused of opposing the tsar for his Raskolniki practices and Nikita is informed of this. The people of the village await the arrival of the troops, prepare to burn themselves in the church. As the soldiers approach, Daniel wakes the others to go to the church. Arina gives Maryushka a strange tasting berry drink and then they go to the church.

Andrei and Pavlo arrive at the church. They have to be sure that Daniel dies. As Andrei raises his sword to kill Daniel, he recognizes him. The men light the fire. The Bobrov estate is destroyed but Andrei manages to save Maryushka. When he sees the bracelet, he knows that she is his granddaughter. He leaves her with Eudokia and Nikita in Moscow.

In 1710, Peter constructs a new capital city along the Neva River. This is St. Petersburg. After Eudokia and Nikita's death, Maryushka is taken in by Procopy and they live in St. Petersburg.

Maryushka falls in love with a peasant boy and Procopy makes the arrangements for the marriage. One day she meets her Uncle Pavlo on the street. When the tsar Russianized the south, estates were seized. Pavlo is digging ditches in St. Petersburg. Pavlo is killed before Procopy can rescue him.

Chapter eight begins in the year 1786. Alexander Bobrov, grandson of Procopy, is in his early thirties and a prominent official in the regime of Catherine the Great. He is well educated and broke. The interest on his debt exceeds his income. He can marry the German girl Tatiana.

Russia has grown under Catherine II, known as Catherine the Great.



Outside Alexander is handed a message to attend a meeting. After dinner, Alexander goes to see Countess Torova, a cousin of his father. His plan is to become the lover of Catherine the Great.

Chapters 7-8, pgs. 455 - 518 Analysis

Peter the Great did many things for Russia, even though he was despised by the people. The Russians were a backward nation compared to Europe, and Peter tried to modernize. There are many plots and conspiracies against him. Procopy Bobrov is a lifelong supporter of Peter since he understands what Peter is trying to do for Russia.

Andrei reappears with his son Pavlo. He has also prospered under Peter the Great and comes to Moscow when he learns that his friend Nikita is still alive. While there, they learn of trouble at Russka with the Rankolniki. Andrei tries to help his friend out by killing Daniel to save the estate from the troops. When he sees Daniel, he recognizes him as Stepan. He can't stop them from killing themselves, but he does save his granddaughter, Arina.

Year later, in 1786, Alexander Bobrov is a high ranking official in the court of Catherine the Great. He has serious financial difficulties and looks for a way to solve them, including becoming the lover of Catherine the Great.



Chapter 8, pgs. 518 - 579

Chapter 8, pgs. 518 - 579 Summary

Alexander goes to the palace of the countess. His mistress, Madame Adelaide de Ronville lives in the palace. The countess usually selects a topic for her salons and then begins the debate. The evening's topic is freedom of speech, and Bobrov is part of the debate. He talks to the countess, who says he is not in her will but since he is having financial difficulties and is a relative, she will include him if he marries Tatiana.

Alexander does not know that the countess had dictated the letter from Tatiana giving him a deadline for his decision to marry her.

The meeting Alexander attends is that of the Freemasons.

The marriage of Alexander and Tatiana is happy at first, but after a few months he begins to attend the countess's salons alone. He still needs Adelaide. At about the same time she learns that she is pregnant, she suspects that there is something other than Adelaide because of Alexander's absences.

The Freemasons included many intellectuals and society members, including a man named Novikov, who Alexander called the professor. Novikov is his mentor. They call themselves the Followers of the Holy Cross, or the Rosicrucians. The inner circle is dedicated to creating a new order. He is required to make substantial contributions.

In 1789, Alexander and Tatiana have another of their frequent discussions about money. She refuses to ask her father for money. He writes the professor that he is withdrawing from the Freemasons. When Tatiana has a difficult labor and the doctor thinks she will die, Alexander promises God that he will give up Adelaide if his wife and child live. Both live and she produces another son two years later. When Tatiana's father dies, they find he only had a small wealth. Alexander and Tatiana live within their income.

Alexander learns that Novikov was arrested from someone at one of the countess's salons. The general he had debated free speech with is also there and baits Alexander about Voltaire and the Jacobins. After this, the countess refuses to see him and cuts him out of her will.

Alexander goes to the Catherine Palace to see Platom Zubou, Catherine's latest lover. The man owes him a favor and he wants a position with a good salary. Catherine walks in and he is introduced. He is dismissed and returns to St. Petersburg. He goes to the palace of the countess and lets himself in. He finds her in the bedroom. While talking to her, he scares her and she dies. He sneaks out of the palace knowing that the lawyer has not yet changed her will. He is arrested as he arrives at his house.

Alexander is questioned by the great interrogator Sheshkovsky. He wants to know about Colovion, the code name for Novika. Over the next three weeks, Alexander talks about



the Rosicrucians. He receives a ten year sentence. Tatiana is allowed to visit and says the countess is alive and demanded his arrest. He will be imprisoned at the monastery in Russka.

In 1796, Alexander is at the Russka monastery. Tatiana and the children visit every month. The other prisoner at the monastery is Tsar Peter, the husband of Catherine. When Catherine dies in December, Alexander is released.

Chapter 8, pgs. 518 - 579 Analysis

Alexander became involved with the Freemasons before he married Tatiana. He wanted to be associated with the right people and basically aspired to a place in society that was above him. He always had money problems until he promised God he would be faithful to Tatiana if she and the baby survive. He quit the Freemasons, but his involvement came back to haunt him many years later. When he nearly scares the countess to death, she helps build a case against him. Tatiana stood by his side, helping out where she could. She is a much better business person than he is. They are debt free when he is released from prison.



Chapter 9, pgs. 580 - 644

Chapter 9, pgs. 580 - 644 Summary

The year is 1802. Two cousins, Ivan Suvorin and Ivan Romanov, are talking in Russka. Both are descendants of Maryushka. Suvorin offers Romanov the opportunity to go into business with him but he refuses.

When Alexander Bobrov was away seeking an appointment with the new tsar, Tatiana becomes pregnant by a Hussar officer. Alexander decides to raise the child as his own. They name the child Sergei.

In 1812, Russia prepares for war against Napoleon. Dirty Place has been renamed Bobrov. Alexander says he is more concerned about the serfs than Napoleon's troops. The serfs are virtually slaves that are owned by the master they serve. The only escape is military service, and the wealthier serfs could buy another serf to serve in their place. Alexander demands an outrageous price to release Suvorin's son from the military and the Suvorins hate him for it.

Moscow is burned in the war. The Bobrovs wait for news of the battles. By 1815, Napoleon is defeated.

In 1817, Sergei attends school at the tsar's palace near St. Petersburg. His sister Olga attends a convent school. Sergei's hero is Pushkin.

In 1822, Sergei works in the foreign ministry. Olga is married and living near Smolensk. The Suvorins now run two small factories and Tatiana has promised them to help obtain their freedom. Ilya, the oldest Bobrov son, is traveling with the elder Suvorin and they stay at an inn where Ilya's money is stolen. Alexander finds Suvorin guilty of the theft and sentences him to Siberia. Tatiana writes a letter to the younger Suvorin, Savva, in Moscow. He decides he will not return to Russka.

Alexis Bobrov is in the northern province of Novgorod with General Arakcheyev, a close advisor of Tsar Alexander. They are looking at a social experiment which impresses Alexis.

In 1825, there is an attempted revolution known as the Decembrist conspiracy. The month before, the tsar had died of illness. The new tsar, Nicholas, quashes the rebellion and executes the leaders.

By 1827, Alexander is dead, Olga is a widow and Alexis is a widower with a son named Mikhail, who is sent to live with Tatiana. All but Sergei come to Russka for the summer. Alexis brings his friend, Feyador Petrovich Pinegin. One day while they are all sitting on the veranda, Sergei arrives in a troika. He is in trouble with the secret police for a poem he has written. Sergei is traveling with a man named Karpenko.



One day the secret police from the Third Department arrive to arrest the priest at Russka. He is accused of operating a Masonic press, but the police find nothing.

One evening, Olga begins a discussion that results in comments on the military. Sergei is very critical of the military and tsar.

Chapter 9, pgs. 580 - 644 Analysis

Conditions for the peasants have deteriorated in Russia over the years as is shown by the situation of the Suvorins. They are virtual slaves of their master. Suvorin has to pay a small fortune to keep his son out of the military service. Alexander doesn't like the Suvorins even though his wife looks kindly upon them. When Ilya's money is stolen, Alexander uses his power to send the elder Suvorin to Siberia.

After Alexander's death, there is a great deal of dissension in the Bobrov family. Sergei is in trouble with the government over a poem, his criticism of the tsar, government and the military. Alexis, a military man, quarrels with his brother. The nice enjoyable summer Tatiana had hoped for with her children is very tense.



Chapters 9 -10, pgs. 644 - 707

Chapters 9 -10, pgs. 644 - 707 Summary

Pinegin decides to talk to Alexis about marrying Olga. The village prepares for the feast of John the Bather. As the group walks to the feast, Sergei recites some of his poetry. Sergei states his love for Olga and tells her that he is only a half brother. Pinegin finds them in an embrace. Pinegin begins to plan his revenge.

A soldier arrives with Savva Suvorin in chains. Sergei knows it is his fault since they met in a Moscow street. Alexis says Sergei did not report the meeting to him. Count Benckendorft of the Third Department has sentenced Sergei to three years exile in the Ural Mountains. Mikhal, called Misha, hears his grandmother fighting with his father.

In 1844, the battle between Savva and the Bobrov family continues. Tatiana stops the flogging of Savva and is constantly defending Savva the following years. Savva wants his freedom but Alexis says it isn't available at any price.

The famine begins in 1839. Alexis is away at the time. In May of 1844, Tatiana gives Savva a passport for Moscow. He obtains a large loan from the Theodosians and tries to purchase his freedom. Alexis refuses.

When Sergei returns, he is married to Nadia. At dinner, Ilya announces he is leaving Russia to write a book. He talks about Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations and freeing the serfs. Free peasants are more productive. Ilya discusses the issues with Alexis. Sergei and Ilya continue the discussion after Alexis retires for the evening.

Misha, Pinegin and others arrive at the Bobrov house. On a walk, Misha finds Nadia and Pinegin locked in an embrace. Seducing Nadia is part of Pinegin's revenge against Sergei. When Misha sees Pinegin leaving Nadia's room, he challenges him to a duel.

Sergei returns from the Ukraine, bringing Karpenko with him. They plan to go to Moscow and St. Petersburg. Misha tells Sergei about Nadia and Pinegin. The duel takes place between Pinegin and Sergei. Sergei is killed. In his last letter to Alexis, he asks for the freedom of Savva, which Alexis grants.

In 1855, Misha is in Sevastopol fighting the Crimean War. He now has a son, Nicolai. He decides that if he survives, he will live in Russka. Both Alexis and Ilya are now dead. He meets Pinegin, who says they will have their duel after the war.

Misha returns to Russka in 1857. He has inherited the estates of his dead brothers. Savva employs half the people in Russka in his cotton plant. Misha knows there are many Theodosians and Old Believers among them. Word comes then that the serfs are to be freed.



Chapter ten begins in the year 1874. Nicolai Bobrov is twenty years of age and is traveling by train to the city of Vladimir. He begins the journey to Russka.

Timofei Romanov is quarreling with son Boris. They had not fared as well as they hoped under the Emancipation of the Serfs. Boris wants to move out of the house.

Nicolai arrives home. Misha and Anna are happy to see him. His friend is Yevgeny Pavlovich Popov. Misha is suffering financially from the emancipation. Russia is strong as a nation and there have been many reforms. Nicolai and Popov volunteer to work in the village without pay.

Trouble continues to plague the Bobrov family. To maintain control of Sergei, Alexis has Savva returned in chains and Sergei sentenced to three years in the Urals. Alexis refuses to give Savva his freedom, no matter what the price.

Chapters 9 -10, pgs. 644 - 707 Analysis

The tensions between the brothers intensifies. Pinegin, who wants to marry Olga, finds her in an embrace with Sergei. Pinegin vows revenge and he plots it over many years. His sources keep him informed about the Bobrovs, and he arrives in Russka when Sergei is absent and seduces Sergei's wife Nadia. Sergei challenges him to a duel and is killed. Misha also challenged Pinegin to a duel and was at first refused until he called Pinegin a coward. Pinegin can select the date for the duel whenever he wants.

By 1874, they have been many changes in Russia due to the reforms. The peasants are emancipated but on terms that don't benefit either the peasant or the landlord.



Chapters 10-11, pgs. 707 - 774

Chapters 10-11, pgs. 707 - 774 Summary

Nicolai and Popov have a plan, which is why they are working for free. Misha is curious about the situation but can't find out much except to feel a gulf between him and his son. They discuss the problem of the village and how the Suvorin linen factory adds to the problem. Popov goes out with a girl named Arina, who then warns Nicolai about him.

Popov is deciding which people can be useful to him. He decides to learn more about the Suvorins. He talks to Peter Suvorin.

Misha and his son discuss religion. Nicolai believes that God is dead and will be replaced by science. When Misha says that a person like him won't exist in the kind of world Nicolai envisions, Nicolai says that he is already dead.

Popov secures a storeroom from Peter Suvorin and uses it to produce and store leaflets. Nicolai begins speeches to groups of people about rising up against the oppressors. The movement across Russia is known as Going to the People. Students go to hundreds of villages as Nicolai and Popov did, to preach the revolution. After a few speeches, the villages decide to have him arrested. Misha intervenes.

Misha tells Popov to leave and he refuses. It is Nicolai who tries to incite revolution. Misha tells Popov he can stay if he refrains from political activities and tells people Nicolai is sick. Popov roams around the town sketching. He is quietly recruiting followers to the revolution cause. He recruits Natalia and Grigory along with Peter. They distribute leaflets. Savva finds one of the leaflets in the factory.

Savva goes to see Misha about the leaflets. He tells Misha about Natalia and Grigory. He will go to the police if it continues and they will all be sent to Siberia. Misha discusses the situation with Timofei. They tell Popov to leave and he refuses. Misha and Timofei decide they must handle the situation themselves. Boris says he will get rid of Popov if Misha provides a dowry for Natalia. Misha agrees.

Boris and Timofei plan to kill Popov, but he has disappeared. He is meeting with Peter with a message from the central committee. Peter leaves by boat. Popov moves the contents from the storeroom to under the staircase of Savva Suvorin's house. He is trying to implicate the absent Peter for the revolutionary leaflets. While digging, he finds a skull which he keeps. While he is out, Natalia and Grigory, looking for privacy, enter the storeroom. Not knowing this, Popov sets the warehouse on fire. Popov returns to the house, surprising Misha. He has written letters from Peter to Nicolai and himself implicating Peter.

Popov gives Misha the letter to Nicolai in exchange for money. Misha gives him a horse and Popov leaves. The bodies of Grigory and Natalia are found the next morning and relations between the Bobrovs and Romanovs cooled.



In chapter eleven, the year is 1881. Tsar Alexander is assassinated by a group called the People's Will, but there is no uprising. Rosa Abramovich is ten years old at the time and a musical prodigy. She lives in a Ukrainian village and is friends with the sons of the Cossack Karpenko.

By edict of the tsar, the Jews live in the Jewish Pale, which consists of Poland, Lithuania and White Russia. The purpose is to prevent them from going to the orthodox north. The Jews are pressured to convert.

Rosa's father is attacked in the street for being Jewish. Karpenko rescues them but says their house will probably be burned.

Chapters 10-11, pgs. 707 - 774 Analysis

Nicolai and Popov are part of a large student movement of revolutionaries. They want a new society with all of the land taken from the landowners and industrialists and given to the peasants. Both Nicolai and Popov are surprised at the reaction of the peasants. They would have had Nicolai arrested if Misha hadn't intervened. The result of all this are numerous conspiracies and plots, with Popov framing Peter Suvorin for the leaflets after sending him away. Natalia and Grigory are killed in the fire set by Popov.

The revolutionary movement results in the assassination of the tsar in 1881, but no uprisings.

At this time, Russian Jews are confined to an area known as the Jewish Pale. This consists of Poland, Lithuania and White Russia. There are still non-Jews in this area that persecute the Jews.



Chapter 11, pgs. 774 - 852

Chapter 11, pgs. 774 - 852 Summary

In December 1891, Nicolai is in St. Petersburg. He is thirty-seven years of age and has three children. They have lived in the city for ten years. The father asks him to come home to help out due to the harvest failure. When he rides the train to Moscow, he finds Yevgeny Popov seated at his table. Popov introduces him to Vladimir Ilych Unyanov, who Nicolai recognizes as being the brother of the man who was involved in the plot against the tsar.

Popov talks radical movements in other countries and appears to be very knowledgeable. They talk about the philosopher Hegel and Karl Marx. Nicolai finds the situation in the country to be very bad. They are running out of food. He finds Savva's grandson, Vladimir Suvorin, in charge of the factories and very wealthy.

Arina Romanov takes her seventeen-year-old granddaughter to live at the Bobrov house. She helps out at the house and is company to Arina. She cares for Misha when he is ill.

The area is close to starvation when Vladimir Suvorin arrives with sleds full of grain from the south since the central government does not supply grain.

That spring a cholera epidemic begins. When it subsides, Nicolai returns to St. Petersburg in July. He takes Arina with them as a nanny for his children. After they leave, Timorei contracts cholera. When Misha goes to see him, Boris puts his coat on, contaminated the clothing, and Misha has the disease within a week.

In 1892, Rosa Abramovich, now twenty, lives in Vilnius. After her father's death, she attends the Teacher's Institute and attends many meetings. One of the speakers is the Marxist Peter Suvorin. They fall in love, and in September she goes to Moscow and marries Peter. She converts to Russian Orthodoxy.

In 1905, the revolution begins. It begins with riots in Finland and a peasant uprising in the Ukraine. This leads to government suppression and martial law. There are demonstrations and strikes. There is a strike at the Suvorin factory in Russka and Suvorin explains the situation to Alexander, fourteen-year-old son of Nicolai.

Nicolai sells his estate to Vladimir. The tsar implements reforms and establishes a parliament called the duma. There are representatives of all political factions at the Suvorin party. Peter and Popov are there and they discuss the political situation. Alexander calls Popov a thief and coward and makes an enemy.

In July 1906, Nicolai moves his family to Moscow.



In 1907, Dimitri, son of Peter and Rosa, is attacked by right wing thugs. It is then that he learns that his mother had converted from Judaism. That fall Mikhail Karpenko comes to stay with them while he studies in Moscow. The two boys are close friends with Nadezhda Suvorin. At times, Alexander Bobrov joins them.

Chapter 11, pgs. 774 - 852 Analysis

Things are changing in Russia as it moves closer to revolution. Peter Suvorin and Popov are still working for revolution. Peter, a professor, travels around giving speeches. His wife Rosa also supports the revolution. Nicolai sells his estate to Vladimir Suvorin since he can no longer maintain them. This makes him a failure in the eyes of his son Alexander. Father and son have different political views and Alexander makes an enemy of Popov when they clash at one of Vladimir Suvorin's parties.

Reforms are being implemented in Russia. There have been demonstrations, strikes and peasant uprisings. The tsar realizes that changes are required and allows for an elected дума, but the дума has to no real power and can be dissolved at anytime.



Chapter 11, pgs. 852 - 895

Chapter 11, pgs. 852 - 895 Summary

Alexander, deciding he wants to marry Nadezhda, watches the Suvorin house. When Vladimir is out of town, he sees Popov visit.

Peter believes that the socialists are slowly making progress. Dimitri, whose broken leg left him lame, notices changes in Rose. She makes Dimitri promise to never be a revolutionary. Rosa refuses to see a doctor in spite of everyone's concern for her. Her brothers have emigrated to America and Dimitri overhears Vladimir promising to send Dimitri there if anything happens. Rose dies when she is hit by a tram.

In 1913, Alexander is twenty-two. He wants a court appointment and marriage to Nadezhda. He is bothered by Mrs. Suvorin's relationship with Popov. His problem is that Nadezhda is in love with Karpenko. Mrs. Suvorin warns her daughter about involvement with Karpenko, not knowing that Nadezhda knows of her relationship with Popov.

In August 1914, Alexander is in uniform to fight in World War I. His father is still a member of the Duma. Before leaving for the army, he goes to say goodbye to Nadezhda and has an argument with Karpenko. After a warning from Mrs. Suvorin, Karpenko tells Nadezhda that they are only friends.

Dimitri goes to see Nadezhda and then looks for Karpenko. He goes to Vladimir's new house and finds Vladimir and Karpenko naked in bed.

Alexander is fighting the war in 1915 and is injured. He is brought back to Moscow to recuperate at his father's house. He goes to Russia with the Suvorins in the summer of 1915. In August, the tsar dissolves the Duma and decides to lead the army.

Chapter 11, pgs. 852 - 895 Analysis

Alexander is in love with Nadezhda Suvorin, who is in love with Karpenko. At her mother's insistence, Karpenko tells her that they can only be friends. He is involved in a sexual relationship with Vladimir.

World War I begins and Alexander volunteers for the army. Conditions in Russia seem to be improving until the tsar dissolves the Duma in August 1915. He decides he will lead the army at the front. This is the end of the fledgling democracy in Russia and sets the stage for the revolution.



Chapters 11, 12, Epilogue, pgs. 895 - 945

Chapters 11, 12, Epilogue, pgs. 895 - 945 Summary

On March 2, 1917, the Duma unseats the tsar. With the tsar at the front, the empress is ruling with the help of Rasputin. Rasputin is murdered in December 1916. There are strikes and demonstrations in February and the tsar orders the dissolution of the Duma. The Duma refuses and demands the abdication of the tsar.

The Petrograd Soviet begins to issue orders as Nicolai learns from Alexander. In July, Boris Romanov takes over the estate house in Russia. Kerensky is head of the provisional government. He finds the old papers of the Bobrovs, which contains a letter signed by Peter Suvorin.

By November of 1917, Lenin and the Bolsheviks are in power. Popov tells Mrs. Suvorin how they did it. He assures her that Lenin isn't a dictator and that elections will be held. She tells Popov not to visit again when she learns that this isn't true.

In February of 1918, Russia enters into an armistice with Germany. The Old Russian Empire falls apart as countries like Finland declare their independence. The Cheka is formed by Dzerzhinski to combat opposition. Nicolai goes into hiding since he is on the Cheka list. He escapes to Finland with Vladimir's help.

In July 1918, Vladimir's property and factories are taken over. He is now poor, although his wife and son have escaped from Russia. The tsar and his family are killed. Vladimir and Peter discuss sending Dimitri out of Russia. Karpenko is the only one who decides to leave.

Popov goes to the Suvorin house and tells Nadezhda about Vladimir and Karpenko. She discusses it with Dimitri. That night when they board a train, Nadezhda gets off. She bumps into Popov, who shoves her into the car with her father and Karpenko.

Peter goes to Russka to retrieve his son's music and is never heard from again. He is killed by Boris. Dimitri dedicates Revolution Symphony to his father.

In August of 1918, the Red Army comes to Russka. All grain must be sold to the government, so the villages hide their grain. Popov is with the troops. The revolution has reached the countryside. Boris is shot for trying to hide the grain. Ivan, Arina's son, told them where the grain was hidden. He leaves the village by boat that night.

In chapter twelve, the year is 1937. Dimitri, married with two children, is still composing music. He is impressed with all that Stalin has accomplished. One day he makes the comment that the constitution is a flagrant lie and his son reports him. The NKVD secret police come for them that night.

In August of 1945, Ivan returns to Russka.



In the Epilogue, the year is 1992. Paul Bobrov is thirty-three and the grandson of Alexander and Nadezhda. He is visiting Moscow and Russka. He lives in a Russian community north of New York City. The Soviet regime has ended. Paul had met Sergei Romanov at a trade fair and they both decide to visit Russka.

Chapters 11, 12, Epilogue, pgs. 895 - 945 Analysis

This section relates the events leading to the establishment of the Bolsheviks. Nicolai serves in the duma until the end. He escapes to Finland with the help of Vladimir. Vladimir is not able to fulfill his promise to Rosa since Peter and Dimitri refuse to leave Russia. Dimitri becomes a respected composer until his young son reports him for a comment made about the constitution. Then he is arrested by the NKVD.

In 1992, Paul Bobrov visits Russia after the end of the Soviet regime. He has met a Russian named Sergei Romanov at a trade fair. Since both have roots in Russka, they travel there together. They are impressed by the monastery. They are drawn to the place by the stories they have heard from their ancestors.



Characters

Ivan

Ivan is the son of Olga and Igor and lives in the city of Kiev in the year 1066. He is twelve years old at the time, and Kiev is the capital of Russia. He has two brothers, Boris, who is sixteen, and Svietopolk, who is eighteen and married. Ivan is aware that his mother is a Slav, which makes him half Slav. His father is a descendant of the Alans and serves in the druzhina of the Prince of Kiev and has many business interests in Kiev. When his father's attempts to arrange a marriage for him fail, his father tries to send him on a trade caravan which his partner Zydvyn the Khazar is leading, but they decide he is too young. Ivan is known as a dreamer, but he hopes to be accepted as a warrior. His father says that they will decide his future with Father Luke. As a member of a noble family, Ivan expects to have a brilliant future following his father and brother into the druzhina. His family is dressed in the finest clothing for the trip to the cathedral, but Ivan is told to wear a plain linen shirt. He doesn't know that his father has betrayed him and has chosen a religious life for him. His father takes him to a monastery and introduces him to Father Luke. When he meets Father Luke, Ivan realizes what his father has done. He feels betrayed and rejected by his father. Father Luke decides that Ivan should not become a priest. His father tries to place him in a princely household but fails. Ivan is separated from his family during a revolt and is hidden with the family of his father's partner. Ivan eventually enters the druzhina of Prince Vladimir. He receives Russka as his share of his father's wealth and becomes very wealthy. He marries Emma, the prince's ward, and they have three sons.

Yanka

Yanka is seven years of age in 1237. She lives with her mother, father, and brother, Kiy, in the village of Russka. She is home alone the day the Tatars arrive in Russka. As the Tatar attack begins, she sees her mother, and the two run toward each other. Her mother is slain by the Mongol Mengu, who picks Yanka up and drops her at the sleigh of her father and brother. Eventually her brother Kiy becomes a skilled woodcarver and is taken by the Tatars to work as an artisan for the Khan. Yanka, her father and another family decide to flee the area. They travel by boat on the Oka River to the area of Murom, where her father decides to stay on the estate of the boyar, Milei. The peasants build them a house and they are given land. Several years later, when she is sixteen, her father begins an incestuous relationship with her. When the boyar Milei arrives in their village, he is impressed with her and the way she maintains her home. When she asks to travel to Novgorod with him, he agrees and she becomes his mistress. He is kind to her and she is happy in Novgorod. She finds an old woman in the market to abort the pregnancy. While walking around the city, she meets a Mordvinian slave woodcarver named Purgas. Milei pays off Purgas's debt and Yanka marries Purgas. They return to live at Dirty Place and have three children, who are raised as Christians even though Purgas is a pagan. On a walk one day, she sees the Tatar, Peter or Mengu,



the man with one ear who killed her mother. She shoots him with his bow and arrow. She and her husband destroy the body.

Savva Suvorin

Savva Suvorin is from Russka. He and his father begin a business with cloth factories that becomes quite successful. When his father is sent to Siberia, Savva hides out in Moscow. He marries and has a son and is brought back to Russka as an escaped serf. Alexis Bobrov refuses to allow Savva to buy his freedom. When Sergei is killed in a duel, his last request to Alexis is to give Savva his freedom, which Alexis does. The Suvorin family operates factories in Russka and Moscow.

Alexander Bobrov

Alexander Bobrov is the grandson of Nikita and cousin of the Countess Turova. He is an official in the government of Catherine the Great and has problems living within his income. He is tricked by the countess into marrying Tatiana. Because of his involvement with the Freemasons, he is imprisoned at the monastery in Russka and released when Catherine dies. Tatiana and Alexander have four children. Alexander dies in 1825.

Arina

Arina is from the original village of Russka. She is the daughter of Maryushka and the Cossack Andrei Karpenko. When she is twenty-five, she marries a carpenter and icon painter named Daniel. Daniel had changed his name from Stepan. He had been a Cossack and friend of her father. Both Arina and Daniel are followers of the religious dissident movement Raskolniki. They have one daughter, Maryushka.

Nicolai Bobrov

Nicolai Bobrov is the son of Misha Bobrov. He is educated in Moscow and becomes involved in the Going to the People revolutionary movement of 1874. The intervention of his father saves him from the authorities. He marries and has three children. He sells his estate to Vladimir Suvorin in 1906 and moves to Moscow. He becomes a member of the дума, and when the Bolsheviks gain control, he escapes to Finland.

Peter Suvorin

Peter Suvorin was born in Bobrov. He runs the family factory in Russka until his encounter with Popov. He becomes a follower of Popov and leaves Russka when Popov tells him to, not knowing how Popov set him up. Peter studies in Moscow and becomes a Marxist. He becomes a professor and marries Rosa Abramovich. They have a son named Dimitri.



Vladimir Suvorin

Vladimir Suvorin becomes a wealthy industrialist. He is the brother of Pater. His wife is known for the parties she hosts in Moscow. Vladimir has a sexual relationship with Karpenko, the man his daughter loves. When the Bolshiviks come to power, he helps Nicolai escape to Finland with his wife and son. He, his daughter and Karpenko later follow.

Boris Babrov

Boris Babrov is from Russka in the fifteen hundreds. He is dedicated to tsar Ivan and serves him throughout his life, becoming a member of the feared Oprichnina. He is devious in trying to stay in the tsar's good graces and sets up people to be killed, including his father-in-law and son.

Ivan Zakharin

Ivan Zakharin is the tsar of Moscow and is fighting to overthrow the Tatars in 1552. He is married to Anastasia and they take the name of Romanov. Ivan is the grandson of Ivan the Great. He becomes known as Ivan the Terrible.



Objects/Places

Kiev

Kiev, in 1066, is the capital of Russia. The city is located in what is now the Ukraine.

Ruska

Ruska is a fort on the southeast in border where Zhydayn the Khazar has a warehouse.

Pereiaslov

Pereiaslov is a city located to the south of Kiev.

The Russian R

The Russian R is the shape created by four rivers in the Russian heartland. The rivers are the Oka, Kliasma, Dnieper, and Don.

Muron

Muron is a village on the River Oka in the Russian heartland.

Novgorod

Novgorod is a city in central Russia on the junction of the rivers Volga and Oka.

Moscow

Moscow is located in the Russian heartland in the middle of the loop of the Russian R.

Alexandrovskaya Sloboda

Alexandrovskaya Sloboda is the tsar's summer residence located sixty miles from Moscow.



St. Petersburg

St. Petersburg is city built by Peter's orders northwest of Moscow along the Neva River.

Vilnius

Vilnius is a city in Lithuania located west of Moscow.



Themes

Survival

Survival is a dominant theme of the book, from the beginning to the end. All of the characters of the book have to struggle to survive in one way or another, just as the Russians as a people had to struggle to survive. As development occurred, the strongest tribes become the leaders of the cities and the towns. These princes have their own domains with no strong central authority. Because of this, it is easy for the Tatars to take control of the country. Since the Tatars have a profitable relationship with the landowner and merchants, it is difficult to get rid of them. There were three centuries of Tatar control in which Tatar control was not overcome until Moscow becomes a strong city that dominated other cities. In the south, the Ukraine becomes controlled by Poland. The people in both situations want autonomy, leading to the wars fought by the Cossacks. While this was going on, the peasants struggle for survival. They donate time to the landowner and pay taxes for the support of the landowner. In many cases, there is little left over for them. Crop failures result in famine and starvation. Few could afford to buy their exemption from military service or to purchase their freedom. The landowners fear being out of favor with the tsar. They all must find a way to survive under the regime, and one of the ways of surviving would be to cooperate with and help one another. This occurs at many places during the book. After the revolution, they face new fears that threaten their survival in the form of the Cheka and NKVD. The entire book looks at the survival of the four families.

Power

Power is another theme of the book, and power here means the authority of one group over another group. This kind of power is evident at the opening of the book when Lebed rescued her son from the men of the powerful Alan tribe. Since the Alans are a great warrior tribe, they become the leaders of the towns and cities as they develop. They become the landowners and merchants of the society. The more powerful and stronger group tends to rule, and this is how the Tatars established three hundred years of life over the country of Rus. Their associations with the merchants and landowner made it difficult to unseat them until the Prince of Moscow developed some central authority by conquering various cities. The position of Prince of Moscow soon evolved into the position of tsar of Russia. The nobility basically derive their power from the tsar and therefore seek to please him. The power of the nobility is basically determined by their position with the tsar and their wealth. Their wealth comes from the favors they obtain from the tsar and the income from their estates. The peasants are the workers on the estates and their lives are basically determined by the landowner. He has total power over them functioning as judge and executioner. His income comes from how much they produce and what he can extract in taxes. The landowner has the power to prevent the peasant from purchasing his freedom, as Bobrov did to Suvorin. This resulted in oppression of workers and peasants and led to the revolution.



Change

Change is another dominant theme of the book. Since the time span of the novel is eighteen hundred years of Russian history, there is a lot of change that takes place. The book opens with a tribal society that results in the strongest tribe becoming the leaders of the town and cities. There is no central government and succession passes from brother to brother, which is very disruptive to the society when a prince dies. Eventually, one of the princes, the Prince of Moscow, becomes strong enough to conquer other cities. This leads to the expulsion of the Tatars and the establishment of the Tsar of Russia. Succession now passes from the father to the children, which avoids some of the disruption of the earlier system. There is no a central authority that holds the country together and can fight off foreign invaders. The nobility functions under the tsar and control the fate of the serfs on their land. As the laws concerning serfs change, the peasant who once could obtain his freedom now can't. He is basically the property of the landowner who could extract what he wanted in terms of work and taxes. The people of Russia, including the nobility, want more of a say in their destiny. The tsar is finally pressured into allowing a parliament, or дума. The first дума, even though elected, basically had no power. This gradually changed until the дума forced the tsar to abdicate. At this point, the дума loses control to the Bolsheviks, who establish a new order of government base.



Style

Style

Point of View

Russka, by Edward Rutherford, is written in the third person point of view with the narrator being the author. This perspective allows the author to provide all of the details and background information that the reader needs to understand the novel. In a novel of this kind, the book covers eighteen hundred years of generations, history, religion and culture. The author could have written in the first person point of view with the main character of each section being the narrator, but this would have confined the knowledge of the reader to the knowledge of the main character and would have been severely restricting. The book would not be as rich in content and detail as it is. This limiting situation is avoided by use of the third person perspective. The author can easily provide the reader with historical information and the necessary details and background information to make the reading of the novel a rich and enjoyable experience. There is plenty of dialogue that allows the reader to come to know the characters. The perspective chosen by the author is the one that is most appropriate for the novel.

Setting

There are various places in Russia and the surrounding areas that are settings for the action of the novel. Russka is a village in the Russian heartland in what is called the Russian R. The Russian R is derived from the rivers Don, Oka, Kliasma and Dneiper. Kiev is a city in the Ukraine and Pereiaslov is a city located south of Kiev. Muron is a city on the Oka River and Novgorod is a city located where the Rivers Oka and Volga meet. There are scenes in all of these cities as well as Vilnius, which is located in Lithuania, part of the Jewish Pale. Most of the action of the novel takes place in Russka with the neighboring village of Dirty Place, which is renamed Bobrov. There are scenes in the estate house, monastery, factory and various houses of villages. Moscow becomes the first capital of Russia and there are scenes in various homes and places there. When the new city of St. Petersburg is built, it becomes the new capital of Russia. Both Vladimir and Peter Suvorin have homes there. There are also the various palaces of the tsar's that function as setting, such as the Alexandraskoya Sloboda and the Catherine Palace. There are also scenes in other areas as the characters travel and fight wars.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel and the meaning of the terms used are easy to understand. There are few complicated words and no terms with hidden or complicated meanings. The novel is written in an everyday English vernacular that the reader should have no trouble with. There are some Russian terms which are to be expected in the novel, but



the author defines them so they present no problems for the reader. The reader quickly becomes used to them. As Russia is moving toward revolution, the characters at a Suvorin party have a discussion about Marxism and the different political groups. Rutherford is very good at explaining Hegelian and Marxian terms and the position of the different groups. Again, the reader should have no problems grasping the meaning of these terms and following the conversations of the characters. Rutherford is very good at defining terms and explaining the different concepts. The writing style of the author results in a novel that is easy reading. There is little to slow down the reader. The book is an enjoyable reading experience.

Structure

The structure of the novel is rather simple. The action of the novel is divided into twelve chapters and an Epilogue. Each chapter has a title, and within each chapter there are divisions by date. The novel is chronological without jumping around in time, so the reader always knows where in time the story is. The chapter title is also written on the top of every right hand page. Since the twelfth chapter ends in 1945, the Epilogue takes place in 1992, when members of two of the families return to Russka. The chapters vary in length with most of them being quite long.

There is no Table of Contents, but one is not really needed. There is an Acknowledgments section in which the author thanks those who were helpful to him. There is a Preface which is very informational and should be read by the reader. It discusses pronunciation and what is fact and what is fiction in the novel. There is a Family Tree which shows the lineage of the families of a chapter by chapter basis. This is very useful to the reader since many of the characters have the same name. There is also a map showing the Russian R.



Quotes

"For this was the land that would one day be known as Russia."

Chap. 1, p. 2

"Kiev, the golden. But there was one problem in the land of Rus. Its rulers had devised a political system that did not, and could not, possibly work. The problem lay in the system of succession."

Chap. 2, p. 68

"Perhaps. But your rulers of Rus are incapable of order. You can't deny it. The royal house is in chaos."

Chap. 2, p. 137

"He had been right about the Tatars: right in every respect. Everything had come to pass exactly as he had told those Novgorod merchants it would, a dozen years ago."

Chap. 3, p. 204

"Elena knew very well that the bad feeling between her husband and her father represented a deep divide between those who were behind the reforming tsar, and the old ruling classes, great and small, who disliked the whole tone of his rule."

Chap. 5, p. 291

"In the year 1572, the dreaded Oprichnina was officially ended. All reference to its existence was forbidden."

Chap. 5, p. 339

"As history was to show, with this great law code, the road to the final subjugation of the Russian peasant had been quietly opened. For over two centuries, longer than the actual subjugation to the Mongols, most Russians would be born serfs."

Chap. 6, p. 398

"Indeed, though many of Peter's reforms were for the ultimate good of Russia, it is certainly true that most were actually thought of originally as ways of raising revenue more efficiently."

Chap. 7, p. 402

"But when the unsuspecting Alexander had come to her asking about an inheritance - the very same evening - she had almost laughed out loud. Only by inspecting her hands had she been able to keep a straight face. And hadn't she played her cards to perfection? How she enjoyed that - defeating the gambler at his own game!"

Chap. 8, p. 535

"When the story of Napoleon's great invasion of Russia is told, it is often forgotten that, in the months leading up to it, many Russian landowners feared an internal revolution



more than they feared the invader."

Chap. 9, p. 586

"The duel between Savva Suvorin and the Bobrov family entered its final stage in the year 1844. It was between a master who respected by hated his serf, and a serf who hated and despised his master."

Chap. 9, p. 656

"'In Russia a superstitious church supports an autocratic tsar and the people live in darkness, like slaves. But science will sweep it all away, and then,' he concluded impressively, 'there will be a new world.'"

Chap. 10, p. 719

"And now, gradually, Nicolai believed, we shall bring our people into the modern world by exploiting this vast wealth we now own. That was Nicolai Bobrov's hope, and his joy in the railway."

Chap. 11, p. 778

"And on that dreamlike day it also came to him how much there was about people he did not understand."

Chap. 11, p. 887

"Popov seldom allowed himself to be weak. Perhaps never again, he thought, would he step out from the tough, protective shell that grew, like a carapace, upon him. He turned. Mrs. Suvorin and his last connection with her were gone. There was only the revolution now. It was, after all, what he had lived for so long."

Chap. 11, p. 917



Topics for Discussion

What was the problem with the governing structure of the Rus that made them susceptible to a Mongol attack and takeover?

How is the monastery of Saint Peter and Paul established at Dirty Place? What role did fear and luck play in the building of the monastery?

What role did the powerful clans play in sustaining Tatar rule? What changes did Tsar Ivan make in the fifteen hundreds that allowed him to successfully overthrow the Tatars?

Compare and contrast the regimes of Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great? What are the similarities and differences? What did Peter do for Russia?

In what way do the Bobrov's have their first encounter with revolutionaries? What happens in the village?

What does Peter Suvorin say that a Marxist revolution won't occur in Russia? Why wasn't Russia ready for revolution?

Why do Paul Bobrov and Sergei Romanov travel to Russka in 1992? What draws them there?