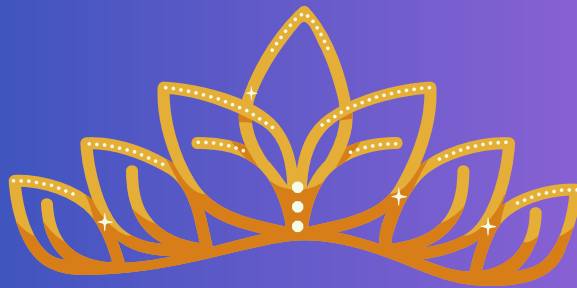


Anastasia

Dramaturgy Actor Packet

Created by Easton Edwards-Hoff
for Valley Theatre Company's
2024 Production of Anastasia



Actor Packet

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Timeline Leading up to the Show

1894

Nicholas & Alexandra
(Anastasia's parents)
get married & Nicholas
becomes Tsar

1905

Bloody Sunday
Massacre - the catalyst
for the Russian
Revolution

1918

Russian Revolution -
leading to Tsar Nicholas
abdicating Royal Throne

1895 - 1904

Anastasia's siblings are
born: Olga, Tatiana,
Maria, Anastasia, Alexei

1914 - 1917

Russia's involvement in
World War 1

1927

Soviet Russia - where
the play takes place!

Timeline Leading up to the Show

1894 1904 - Nicholas & Alexandra

- **Nicholas** (Nicky) meets **Alexandra** (Alix) in 1884, when Nicky is 16 & Alix is 12
- In 1889, 20 year old Nicky spends a winter getting to know 17 year old Alix and **the two fall in love**
- Nicky pursues Alix from 1891 - 1894, and the two **get engaged in 1894**
- Nicholas becomes Tsar a few months later, and **the two are married soon after he becomes Tsar.**
- From 1895 - 1904, they would have **4 daughters & 1 son**



Timeline Leading up to the Show

1894 - Nicholas & Alexandra

Photo taken around the time of Nicky & Alix's engagement



Laurit Tuxen's painting entitled "The Wedding of Nicholas II and Alix of Hesse"

Timeline Leading up to the Show

1905 - Bloody Sunday (catalyst to the Revolution)

- Led by Vladimir Lenin, revolutionists felt like they weren't being listened to and decided to **take a more drastic approach**
- **Revolutionists marched** upon Tsar Nicholas's winter palace
- Tsar Nicholas's forces **open fire** on the revolutionists **and kill hundreds**
- Tsar Nicholas agrees to formulate some assemblies (called Dumas) to work towards reform, but it would **lead to no real change**
- Bloody Sunday **empowers more peasants & laborers** to impose resource strikes in order to gain leverage over the monarchy

Timeline Leading up to the Show

1905 - Bloody Sunday (catalyst to the Revolution)

Two paintings depicting the events that took place on Jan 22, 1905 (Bloody Sunday)



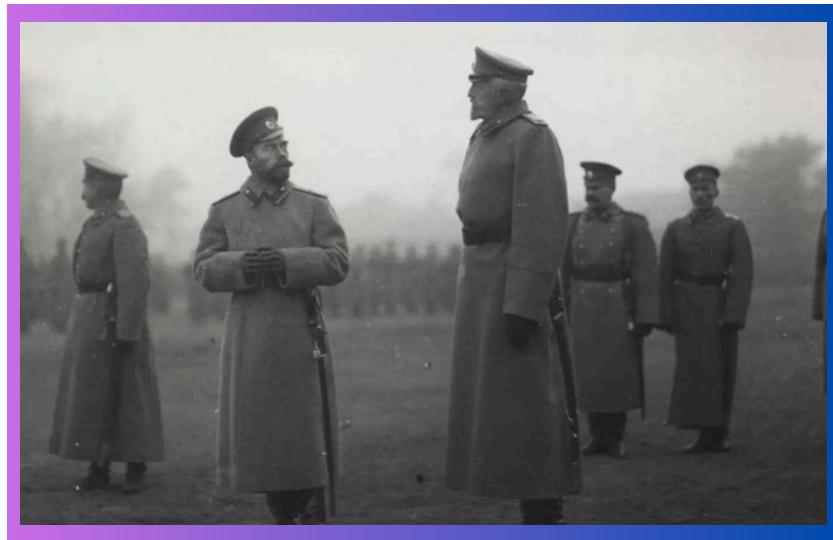
Timeline Leading up to the Show

1914 - 1917 - Russia's Involvement in WW1

- 1914 - Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand is assassinated, and **Austria/Hungary (allied w/ Germany) declare war on Serbia (start of WW1)**
- Tsar Nicholas actually **appealed to his cousin** - a German Kaiser - to stop the war, with no avail
- Russia joins the **Allied Forces**
 - Allies: Russia, France, UK, Italy, Japan, & U.S. (later)
 - Central Powers: Germany, Austria-Hungary, & Turkey
- In 1915, **Tsar Nicholas takes command** at Russian army front & leaves Tsar Alexandra in charge
- She is unpopular and being advised by **Rasputin**, which would lead to his ultimate assassination

Timeline Leading up to the Show

1914 - 1917 - Russia's Involvement in WW1



Top left and bottom right: Russian propaganda posters

Top right: Tsar Nicholas at the Russian army front

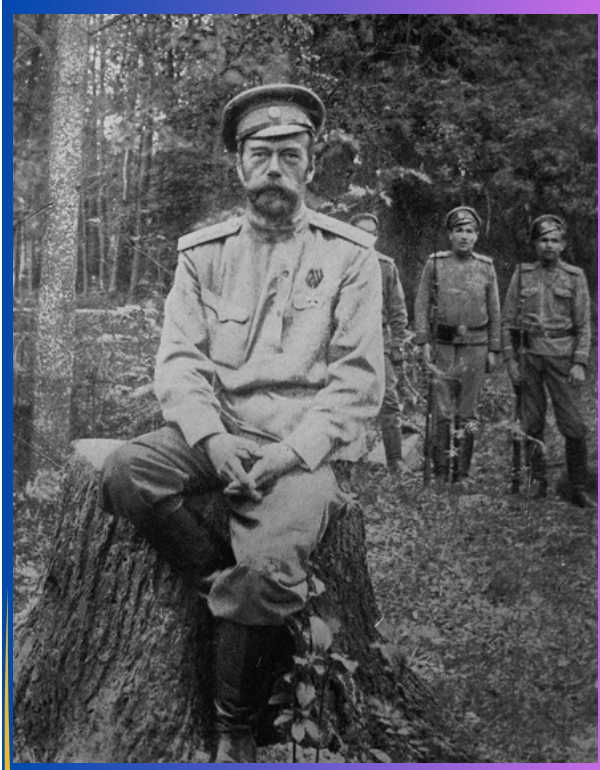
Timeline Leading up to the Show

1918 - Russian Revolution

- Tsar Nicholas repeatedly **broke reformation promises** made after Bloody Sunday
- February 1918 - starving protestors took to the streets of St. Petersburg to **demand food**
- 3 days later, **St. Petersburg police are called** out to quell the uprising
- **Troops are unsuccessful** against throngs of revolutionaries
- After several days, **Tsar Nicholas** finally **abdicates the throne**
- A provisional government is set up in place of the Tsar, but eventually **Lenin & his forces take power**
- Soon two forces broke out - Red army & white army
 - **Red army** - Bolsheviks, Lenin, & his supporters (more peasant class)
 - **White Army** - more moderate revolutionists who sought a less violent revolution (more upper/middle class)
- Eventually, Red Army would **overpower** White Army
- July 16th, 1918 - **Romanov family is executed**

Timeline Leading up to the Show

1918 - Russian Revolution



Clockwise from photo above: Tsar Nicholas after being captured, protestors gathering outside of the Tsar's winter castle, & Lenin speaking to a crowd after the revolution

World of the Play (1927)

Life after the Revolution

- Soviet party enacted “War Communism”
 - utilized **force and took** resources from working class, mainly **food**
- The main food sources are **bread & dairy** (including sour cream & fermented milk)
- Wages were kept very low, making every day living **very expensive**
 - This led to **high inflation** and currency becoming useless
 - The working class began **bartering for goods** instead of currency
- **Canning** also becomes very popular and canned goods became **very valuable** (“*two cans of beans...*”)
- Public is told to adopt a concept known as “**partiinost**” (party-minded), meaning - always be a **good comrade** by doing what is best for the party & state.
- **Everyone worked** - including women, which is a change from the pre-revolution days
- Parts of Russia suffered a **severe famine** in 1921 - 1922

World of the Play (1927)

Life after the Revolution (cot'd)

- **Alcoholism** becomes an epidemic in the lower/working class
- Due to a rapid increase in manufacturing, there is also an uptick in **work related injuries and health issues**, especially for **factory workers**
- The new Communist government also instituted **public eating cafeterias** where working class would eat in masses
 - these cafeterias employed by people with little to no cooking skills and were often **very unsanitary**
- There is a huge movement to convert single unit living to **communal style living** (“10 families...”)
 - while everyone has a place to live, it is often extremely cramped, leading to a **highly violent and irritable population**
- Education is more freely offered, but **many people choose to work** instead since living is so expensive
- Despite steady employment being a requirement of a “good comrade,” several factors led to **jobs being very difficult to come by**

World of the Play (1927)

Travel in 1920 Soviet Russia

- Soon after the Russian Revolution, the Red Army **almost forbid passports exclusively**, but decided to allow passports
 - However, the Soviets **greatly restricted foreign travel**
- Citizens had to jump through **numerous hoops** to travel abroad
- In 1922, emigration out of Russia became **extremely difficult**
- By 1928, the Soviet Union began to implement **border control** with a **special forces officers that often used violence** to prevent travel, making travel almost completely impossible



World of the Play (1927)

St. Petersburg - circa 1920



*From top left, clockwise:
photo of St. Petersburg,
St. Petersburg street peddler,
The Admiralty
(circa 1920)*

World of the Play (1927)

St. Petersburg - circa 1920



Nevsky Prospekt

World of the Play (1927)

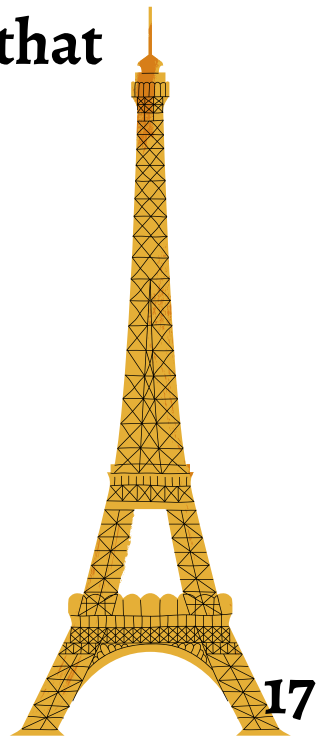
Life in 1920's Paris

- There was an **abundance of liberation**
- Because of how many men were fighting in WW2 - **women also experienced new freedoms**
- **Art was also in abundance** in Paris (also very different from Russia)
 - Pablo Picasso
 - Ernest Hemingway
 - Salvador Dali
 - Josephine Baker
- Paris had a huge number of **immigrants** from other parts of Europe, including Russia
- Unlike Russia - **vegetables, fruit, and other delicacies** were more widely available
- Many Russian immigrants were **generous patrons** of the arts, culture, food, drink & other cultural activities
- Many Russian women began working in **fashion**
 - One displaced Russian general & his sister actually became very close with **Coco Chanel** at the start of her career

World of the Play (1927)

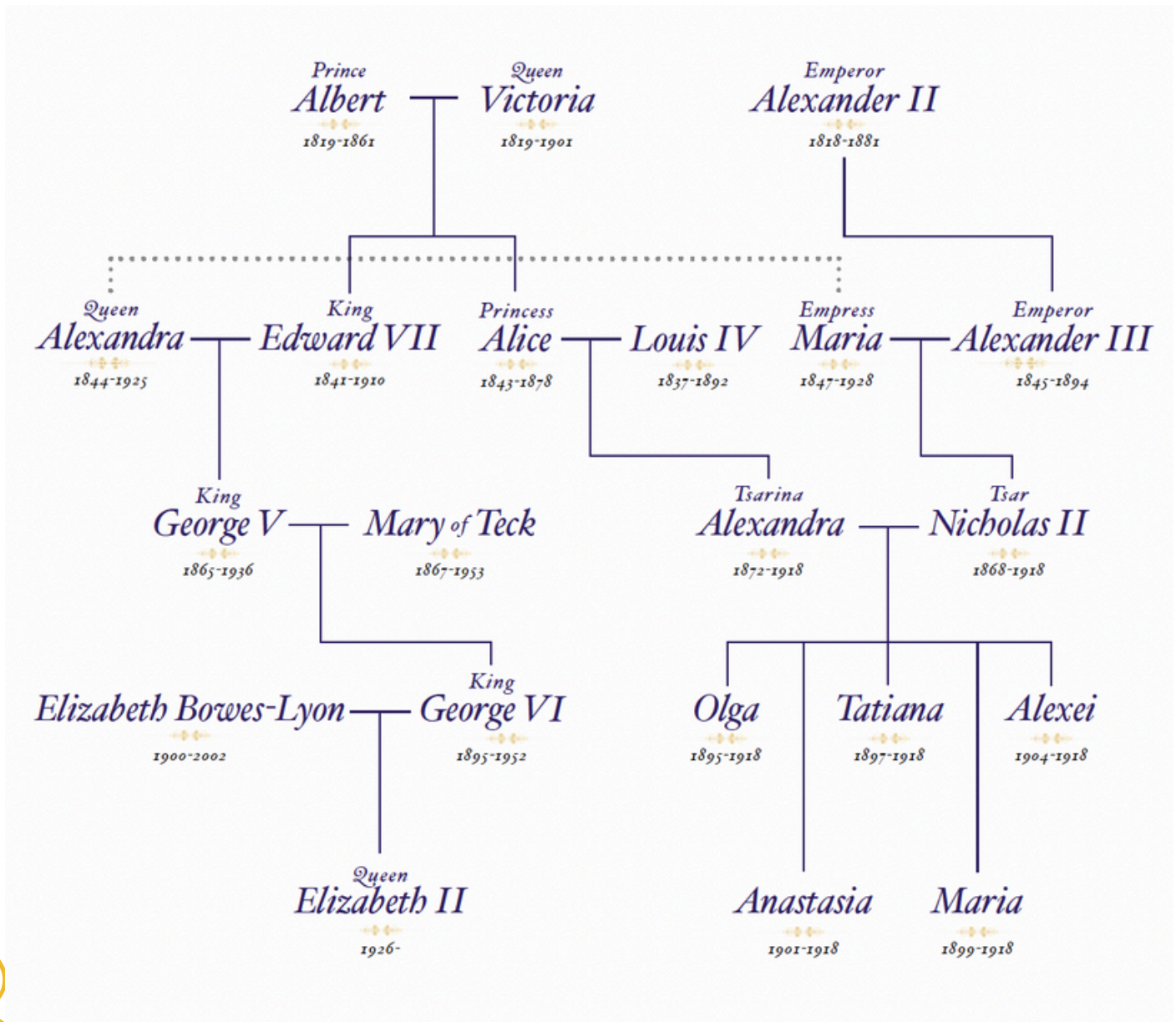
Life in 1920's Paris

Ernest Hemingway, when he first arrived in Paris, wrote that the immigrating Russian nobility were “**drifting along in Paris in a childish sort of hopelessness that things will somehow be all right ... No one knows just how they live except by selling off jewels and gold ornaments and family heirlooms that they brought with them to France.**”



Romanov Family

Family Tree



Romanov Family

1895 - 1904: Anastasia & siblings are born

- 1895 - Oldest daughter **Olga** is born
- 1897 - Second oldest **Tatiana** is born
- 1899 - 3rd oldest daughter **Maria** is born
- 1901 - **Anastasia** (youngest daughter) is born
- 1904 - Tsar & Tsarina's only son **Alexei** is born



Romanov Family

Anastasia's Family Members



Tsar Nicholas

Anastasia's father, became Tsar at 26. Was under prepared to lead but was a loving husband and father



Tsarina Alexandra

Anastasia's mother, like Nicholas - she was fiercely loyal and devoted to her family.



Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna Romanova

Anastasia's paternal grandmother. She doted on her grandchildren.

Grand Duchess Olga

The oldest of the 5, she was stubborn but compassionate, and loved her father very much.



Grand Duchess Tatiana

The second oldest, she was the sibling who kept the other siblings in line.



Grand Duchess Maria

The 3rd oldest (one above Anastasia) she was the most nurturing of the Romanov children



Tsarevich Alexei

The only boy, Alexei, was doted on most, especially since he was hemophiliac.

He and Anastasia were very close.

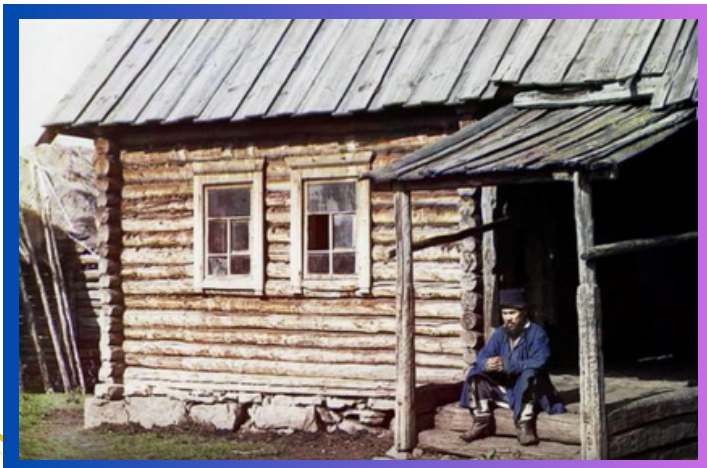


Romanov Family

Lifestyle

- Very **Lavish**
- There was a “**social season**” - like sports or arts
 - Included **grand palace balls**
 - Many aristocratic **couples got engaged** at the end of the social season
- Young people were often **tutored, had private classes, dance classes, etc**
- Life for royalty was filled with **arts, entertainment, parties, and social events**
- Meanwhile, Russia was still practicing **serfdom** (at least until 1861), despite that most of western Europe hadn't practiced feudalism since 14th century (**500 years earlier**)
 - This meant that royalty lived incredibly **lavishly**, while the poor lived incredibly **impoverished**
 - **Serfs** had the worst of it, they were the lowest class

Left: a peasants cabin; right: one of the Romanov's numerous palaces



Romanov Family

Lifestyle



Top: a dance class in a royal palace

Below: a royal palace with over 1000 rooms



Top: a Russian serf (the lowest class prior to the revolution)

Below: cramped living conditions for peasants



Romanov Family

Execution

- On March 1, 1917 - Tsar Nicholas **abdicated** the throne, **abdicated on behalf of his son**, and offered the throne to a distant relative
- The relative declined, and the Romanovs were placed under **house arrest** near St. Petersburg
- In June 1917, they moved them further away from St. Petersburg, and by April 1918, they had been **moved again to Yekaterinburg**
- In the middle of the night on July 16th, they were awoken and told to dress because they were being **transported again**
- They were taken down to the **cellar** with several servants, where commander Yurovsky **read out this statement**:
 - ***“Nikolai Alexandrovich, in view of the fact that your relatives are continuing their attack on Soviet Russia, the Ural Executive Committee has decided to execute you.”***
 - After this, Tsar Nicholas exclaimed **“what? What?”**
- Then several guards raised their handguns and **began shooting at the family**.
- After the smoke cleared, the guards went through again and ensured that the family was indeed **deceased**.

Romanov Family

Execution

- The entire execution lasted for about **20 minutes**, and was a bloody and violent ordeal.
- They were taken out to nearby copper mines, where they were ultimately buried and **wouldn't be discovered until 1979**

For a more detailed recounting of the execution, visit the Wikipedia article below (reader discretion advised)

[Murder of the Romanovs](#)



The basement room where the Romanovs were executed

Historical context by character

Anastasia

- Anastasia was the **second youngest Romanov** and the **youngest daughter**
- While the Romanovs lived a very lavish lifestyle, the Tsar & Tsarina **tried not to spoil** their children
- Anastasia was active, alert, and sometimes a **troublemaker** as a child
- She grew up **taking lessons** in the usual subjects, and more: French, English, history, literature, science, painting, dance & etiquette
- Anastasia loved animals and her first dog was a **pom named Shvibzik**
- When she was a teenager, she would often visit **wounded soldiers** in hospitals and for wounded or illiterate soldiers, she would write letters to their families
- Anastasia was **17 years old** when her family was executed

Historical context by character

Dmitry

- While Dmitry is a fictional character in this show, there is a lot of information about **what life would have been like** for him
- St. Petersburg was the site of **many riots & protests** before, throughout, & leading up to the Bolshevik Revolution:
 - He would have been **6 years old during the Bloody Sunday Massacre**
 - He would have been **19 years old when the February Revolution happened** - the what ultimately would lead to the assassination of the Romanovs
 - Both of these events took place in **St. Petersburg**
- His family was likely very **impoverished**, as was most of Russia
- Dmitry's parents may have been **serfs**, the lowest class of the Russian class system, the class that was "**freed**" in 1861 when serfdom was abolished
 - However, this just led to **a new form of lowest class** - one in which serfs were flocking to cities to find jobs
- The lower class often began working around **11-14 years old**

Historical context by character

Vlad

- As with Dmitry, Vlad is a fictional character but he mentions being a member of the **Russian Imperial Court**
 - This included **politicians, advisors, and even employees** of the Royal family
- Being that Vlad is called “the Common Man” in the script - this likely means that he was a **lower ranking employee**
 - Making his relationship Lilly VERY **scandalous**
- Vlad was likely skilled at or fluent in **French** (as hinted at in the script)
- The Imperial Court members had strict **dress codes and etiquette** they were expected to follow
 - Interestingly - it is noted that Tsar Nicholas (Anastasia’s father) **was very strict** about the Imperial Court following etiquette and ceremonial procedures)
 - Vlad was likely well trained in and **forced to uphold** those procedures and etiquette
- Many members of the Russian Imperial Court were persecuted, imprisoned, & executed during the “Red Terror” after the Bolsheviks took power
- While the Bolsheviks were very serious about **going after the Imperial Court**, many low level employees (like Vlad) were left to accept their new place in society

Historical context by character

Gleb

- As mentioned in the script, **Gleb's father** was one of the soldiers that executed the Romanov's
 - This means that Gleb likely grew up in **Yekaterinburg, the town closest** to where the Romanov's were killed
- Gleb's father was likely a **Bolshevik officer** local to Yekaterinburg
 - His father may have also been part of the **Cheka**, the first Soviet **secret police organization** after the Revolution
- Some historians say that Lenin's own body guard delivered the notice **in person** to execute the Romanovs, meaning that Gleb's father may have gotten the orders **directly from Lenin through his bodyguard**
- At first, joining the Red Army (the Soviet army in it's infancy) was **voluntary**
 - By 1918, it became **obligatory** for men between the ages of 18 and 40
- Soldiers under Lenin's rule were closely monitored to make sure they did nothing that went against the **Bolshevik principles**

Historical context by character

Lily

- Because Lily was a countess, this likely meant that her husband had some **responsibility in Imperial Russia**
- They also likely had **owned land**, which was a sign of power
- Russian nobility was organized according to rank and where in **society** they were born
 - **High born** - just below the dynasties
 - **High well born** - this was often where barons/counts were ranked
 - **Well born**
- Counts & Countesses often were **well traveled and fluent in multiple languages**
- They also often participated in the **arts, cultural activities**, & some countesses worked with **various charities**
- Counts and countesses were often **persecuted and killed after the Bolshevik Revolution**
- Interestingly - only **unmarried women served as Ladies-in-waiting**, but the script tells us that Lily is/was at one point married, even though she is currently serving as a lady-in-waiting

Historical context by character

Dowager Empress

- In her younger years, the Dowager was known for her **exquisite beauty**
- She was also very smart - after marrying, she became **completely fluent in Russian** within a couple of years
- She was also very **fashionable** -
 - It was once remarked that she was “**the best dressed woman in Europe**”
- She was also **very kind, charming, likable, and easy to get along with**
- She **got engaged to Tsarevich Nicholas** in 1864, but **in 1856 he died** before they could marry
 - She was heartbroken and it was reported that she **had to be pulled out of the room** after Nicholas had passed
- She would go on to **marry his younger brother**, Tsarevich Alexander - Anastasia's grandfather
 - However, the Dowager was **still in love with her late fiancé** and Alexander was **in love with his mother's lady in waiting**
- After their wedding, however, **they developed a deep love** for each other and had a **30 year long** happy & devoted marriage
- She would lose one son while he was an infant, but had 4 more children after. She was **very close to her sons** but **distant with her daughters**
- She was one of the most- if not the most - **beloved Tsarinas** by the people of Russia
 - She was very involved in **charity** and was called by her husband “**The Guardian Angel of Russia**”
- Even after Nicholas was crowned Tsar, she was **still more popular than Tsar Nicholas and Tsarina Alexandra** (Anastasia's parents)

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