



The famous priest Rasputin became the favourite of the Russian royal family. Some people called him the Mad Monk. He was killed by a group of noblemen in 1916.

Rasputin was the son of Russian peasants. He presented himself as a holy man who could heal people. He impressed many people with his knowledge and ability to explain the Bible in an uncomplicated way. At the time St Petersburg was the capital of Russia. In 1905 he met there Tsarina Alexandra, and Tsar

Nicholas II. Their son, Alexei, suffered from haemophilia. This meant that if he cut himself, the bleeding would not stop. Because Rasputin was able to make Alexei feel calm, he became popular with Alexandra. The Tsarina saw Rasputin as a mystic, visionary, healer and prophet.



Tsar Nicholas II and his family

In 1914 Russia went to war with Germany. The following year, the Tsar left the court and took command of the Russian army. While he was away, Alexandra, under Rasputin's influence, dismissed government ministers, and replaced many of them with incompetent men. Rasputin and Alexandra were largely responsible for the tsar's failure to respond to the ever rising tide of discontent amongst the Russian people, which eventually led to the Russian Revolution (1917).

- monk:** cleric
- peasant:** farmer
- holy:** saint
- heal:** cure
- impress:** please somebody
- ability:** being able
- tsar:** Russian emperor
- suffer:** have illness
- bleed:** lose blood
- mystic:** magic
- visionary:** seer
- court:** a king's residence
- dismiss:** send away
- failure; fiasco**
- respond:** react
- discontent:** unhappiness
- eventually:** finally
- lead, led led:** guide
- remove:** take away
- evil:** wicked
- poison:** toxic substance
- shoot, shot shot:**
- drown:** die in water

A group of noblemen tried to kill Rasputin, to remove his evil influence. He was rather hard to kill. They poisoned him, they shot him, and then threw him in the River Neva where he finally drowned. This was in 1916. He was aged around 45 when he died.

Change the sentences into the Past tense:

Rasputin becomes the favourite of the empress. ...*Rasputin became the favourite of the empress.* ...

He is called the Mad Monk.....

He says he is a holy man.....

He pretends he can heal people.

In 1905 he meets the Tsarina.

If he cuts himself, the bleeding will not stop.

She sees him as a prophet.

The Tsar leaves the court and goes to the front.

She dismisses some ministers.

They are replaced by incompetent men.

The events lead to the revolution.

They throw him into the cold water.