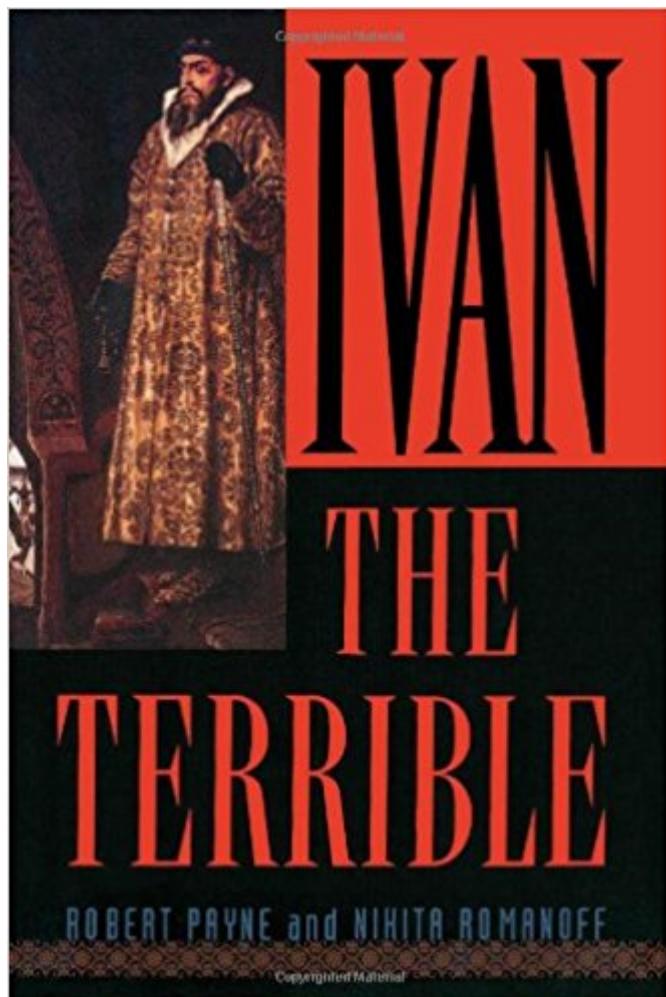


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Ivan The Terrible



Synopsis

Czar Ivan IV (1530-1584), the first Russian ruler to take the title czar, is known as one of the worst tyrants in history, but few people among the general public know how he got such an infamous reputation. Relying on extensive research based heavily on original Russian sources, this definitive biography depicts an incredibly complex man living in a time of simple, harsh realities. Robert Payne, the distinguished author of many historical and biographical works, and Russian scholar Nikita Romanoff, describe in vivid and lively detail Ivan's callous upbringing; the poisoning of his second wife and the murder of his son; his obsession with religion and sin; his predilection for mass murder, evidenced by his massacre of 30,000 citizens of Novgorod; yet his remarkable intelligence as a ruler, supporting the growth of trade and expanding Russia's borders.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ivan was truly in a class with Genghis Khan, Hitler and Stalin, and this study brings him to life with all the fascination which the monstrous evokes. (Publishers Weekly)Grandly conceived with imperial sweep and torch-lit pageantry. (Kirkus Reviews)The authors reveal the most significant moments in Ivan's life and his growing abuse of power. The writing is vigorous and colorful yet never sensational. (CHOICE)Deeply satisfying... . Ivan's reign lasted 54 years, more than a lifetime (perhaps two?) for people of his time. And, together with the evil he perpetrated, he had an immense effect on Russian architecture, the arts, governance and geography. His reign merits better understanding, and this book tells the story in a manner that makes the study enjoyable. (Russian Life)

Robert Payne (1911–1983) was a distinguished historian and author of *The Life and Death of Lenin*, *The Rise and Fall of Stalin*, and *The Dream and the Tomb*. Nikita Romanoff, grandnephew of Nicholas II of Russia, is a world-renowned scholar of Russian history.

"Ivan The Terrible" by Robert Payne and Nikita Romanoff is a superb historical biography of a 16th century madman who was, apparently a living breathing version of Sir Anthony Hopkins portrayal of Dr. Hannibal Lecter in the "Silence of the Lambs." Ivan the Terrible is truly a valuable history and psychological portrayal of a man who slowly became totally insane in a harsh and murderous land and period of time that required great cleverness or, pure brute strength to survive. He was, above all...a true survivalist. Robert Payne and Nikita Romanoff reveal the man, the country, and the treachery like no others. The authors develop and explain in great detail, the development (and final fall) of Ivan's most feared "Oprichniki", and their diabolical atrocities over a populace who has suffered more in the annals of history than perhaps, any other nation. This is not only a magnificent history of Ivan, but of Russia itself. From the raw frozen and muddy landscapes to the grand palaces of the Great Prince.....you will travel through 16th century Russia from the safety of your own home and yet ...continue to shudder from the cold winds, and icy stare of the red haired, Ivan Vasilievich! It makes one wonder if, Russia were cursed with two major psychological monsters, Ivan the Terrible, and Joseph Stalin or if...."one soul inhabited both bodies at different times".

In this sweeping biography, the authors present a multi-dimensional portrayal of this revered and feared Russian leader. The prose is easy to follow, although the authors do get bogged down occasionally in excessive details. Fortunately, that does not occur often. I am not a fan of excessive block quotes, but the excerpts from Ivan's letters provided an interesting window into the evolution of his madness. I would recommend the book to anyone who is interested in 16th century history. The topics include the ongoing efforts of Russia to avoid returning to a vassal state of the Tatars while arm-wrestling with Sweden, Livonia, Lithuania and Poland to gain a dependable point of access to the Baltic. For good measure, the book also provides insight into the diplomatic flirtation between Ivan and Queen Elizabeth.

Quite a studious study on Ivan here & very welcome since there seems to be very few other sources on this ruler, available to the non-scholar who enjoys a "lighter" history lesson. Apparently Ivan was a curse to his country. A coward, religious zealot, rabid inferiority complex and a downright

homicidal maniac. Something of a horrowing experience following this maniac through his reign of absolute terror. Enjoyed the book though. Well written, well edited & recommended.

love this

This biography separates mythological from the authentic Ivan IV. Based on fascinating diplomatic correspondence, seniors of contemporaries, church and state archives and newly discovered records from longer-term, this detailed and well organized interpretive biography is fascinating and convincing. Highly recommended

I ordered this book because of a total lack of knowledge about the period of Russian history. I think the author faced and insurmountable task, in an attempt to write a biography of a man whose life was a descent into dementia, and there is not enough historical information to flesh out a biography. Much of the book I found rather boring, when it described battle after battle. I finished the book with a bit more knowledge of the period, but not really excited about what I had learned.

I thought this was a good read. Thanks

!much of the detail is widely unknown which is what I appreciated most about reading it. One gets a deeper understanding of Ivan the man.

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