



THE IMPERIAL TEA PARTY

**FAMILY, POLITICS AND BETRAYAL
-THE ILL-FATED BRITISH AND
RUSSIAN ROYAL ALLIANCE**

FRANCES WELCH

**PUBLISHED IN SHORT BOOKS HARDBACK £12.99 28th JUNE
TO COMMEMORATE THE 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE ROMANOV KILLINGS**

The British and Russian royal families met three times before the Romanovs' tragic end in 1918. *The Imperial Tea Party* draws back the curtain on those pivotal encounters between these two great dynasties; encounters that had far reaching consequences for 20th century Europe and beyond.

Russia and Britain were never natural bedfellows. But the marriage, in 1894, of Queen Victoria's favourite granddaughter, Alicky, to the Tsarevich Nicholas marked the beginning of an uneasy Anglo-Russian entente that would last until the Russian Revolution of 1917.

As Frances Welch recounts the three extraordinary meetings that took place during those years, although well-intentioned and generally hailed as successes, were beset by misunderstandings and misfortunes – whether it was the Romanovs suffering the draughty rooms and wet hunting expeditions at Balmoral, or Queen Victoria complaining about the food on her visit to the Russian Empire at the port of Revel, or everyone succumbing to seasickness on arrival at Osbourne House on the Isle of Wight.

The two families could not know, as they waved each other fond goodbyes from their yachts at Cowes in 1909, that they would never meet again. King George infamously denied his Romanov cousins asylum in Britain when the Bolsheviks were closing in in 1917, but the assassination of the Tsar and his family horrified him. Whether events might have turned out differently if he had accepted their plea for refuge has been the subject of speculation ever since.

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Frances Welch is the author of *Rasputin* (2014), *The Russian Court at Sea* (2011), *Romanov Fantasy* (2008) and *Sydney Gibbes: Tutor to the Children of the Last Tsar* (2004), all published by Short Books. Frances Welch has written for the *Sunday Telegraph*, *Granta*, *The Spectator* and the *Financial Times*. She lives in Aldeburgh, Suffolk.

Praise for *Rasputin: A Short Life*

“Elegant and insightful.” *Mail on Sunday*

“A delight to read, if horror can be delightful.” *Daily Telegraph*

“A dazzling book.” *Daily Mail*

“Must Read” *Sunday Times*

“Welch writes with a limpid style and cool intelligence.” *Sunday Telegraph*

**“Frances Welch combines historical insight with a novelistic flair for character.”
*Evening Standard***

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