



Lost Splendor: The Amazing Memoirs of the Man Who Killed Rasputin

Prince Felix Yusupov

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The fascinating first-person account of the cross-dressing prince who poisoned Rasputin with rose cream cakes laced with cyanide and spiked Madeira is now back in print. Originally published in France in 1952, during the years of Prince Youssoupoff's exile from Russia, *Lost Splendor has all the excitement of a thriller. Born to great riches, lord of vast feudal estates and many palaces, Felix Youssoupoff led the life of a grand seigneur in the days before the Russian Revolution. Married to the niece of Czar Nicholas II, he could observe at close range the rampant corruption and intrigues of the imperial court, which culminated in the rise to power of the sinister monk Rasputin. Finally, impelled by patriotism and his love for the Romanoff dynasty, which he felt was in danger of destroying itself and Russia, he killed Rasputin in 1916 with the help of the Grand Duke Dimitri and others. More than any other single event, this deed helped to bring about the cataclysmic upheaval that ended in the advent of the Soviet regime.* ~The author describes the luxury and glamour of his upbringing, fantastic episodes at nightclubs and with the gypsies in St. Petersburg, grand tours of Europe, dabbling in spiritualism and occultism, and an occasional conscience-stricken attempt to alleviate the lot of the poor. ~Prince Youssoupoff was an aristocrat of character. When the moment for action came, when the monk's evil influence over the czar and czarina became unbearable, he and his friends decided that they must get rid of the monster. He tells how Rasputin courted him and tried to hypnotize him, and how finally they decoyed him to the basement of the prince's palace. Prince Youssoupoff...is perfectly objective, remarkably modern and as accurate as human fallibility allows. His book is therefore readable, of historical value and intimately tragic. It is as if Count Fersen had written a detailed account of the last years of Marie Antoinette. --Harold Nicholson, on the first English edition, 1955 By Prince Felix Youssoupoff. Hardcover, 5.25 x 8.25 in./300 pgs / 0 color 14 BW0 duotone 0 ~ Item D20143

Lost Splendor: The Amazing Memoirs of the Man Who Killed Rasputin Details

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Ruth says

c1952: Intrigued by anything with the word 'lost' in it, I ordered this book from the Library without knowing the strap line on the republished version - the 'man who killed Rasputin' - so those chapters came as a bit of a shock! Up to then, I had categorised this as a rather self-aggrandising memoir with some interesting insight into the world of the 'nobility' of Russia. It is of its time with many dismissive comments made regarding the physical attributes of people and their station in life together with some appalling stories of his treatment of 'serfs' and retainers. This particular Prince really had some strange hobbies - dressing up as a woman on several occasions as a joke and some sort of ménage-a-trois with tutors and frolicking with gypsies. He spent a lot of time on his estates in the Crimea and as I am reading this during the troubles with Ukraine, Russia and Crime, I gained a bit more insight into the current conflict. Recommended for any of the normal crew who would enjoy learning a bit more about pre-revolutionary Russia. *"He was convinced that the drugs administered to the Tsar were paralysing his willpower, and were given with this intention."*

Bridget says

On the year anniversary of me finding this book, I have decided to remove my overall review for reasons. I'll keep some choice quotes on here, though, because I love them.

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*The tears you have just shed came from your heart. Always be guided by your heart rather than by your head, and your life will be transformed. Happiness does not consist in living in a palace or enjoying a large fortune; these can be lost. True happiness is something that neither men nor events can take from you. You will find it in Faith, in Hope and in Charity. Try to make those around you happy, and you will be happy yourself.*

*Anyone who is capable of doing much evil is also capable of doing much good, if he sets about it in the right way. No matter how serious the offense, it is redeemed by sincere repentance, Remember, the only thing that defiles the soul is spiritual sin; it can remain pure in spite of carnal weaknesses.*

*Until then I had lived only for pleasure, avoiding the sight of suffering in any form; I had not grasped the fact that there were any more essential values than money and the power that goes with it. I now felt the vanity of all this. In discarding my thirst for power and my love for worldly possessions I had at last found freedom.*

(First two are from Grand Duchess Elizabeth, the Tsarina's older sister, while the last one is from Felix himself).

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### Megan says

Personally I would have subtitled this “the partly true account of a complete liar.” I haven’t wanted to read this book, but I felt I needed to, as it is one of a number of primary sources from the community of Russian emigres in the early 20th century before the second World War. But I haven’t wanted to because I’ve felt for a long time that Yussopov was a fop and a liar. His memoirs didn’t prove my impressions wrong. Actually, the entire memoir struck me as nothing but a fish story, you know, where someone says “I caught a fish this big,” and it’s understood by everyone involved that the only thing true in the statement is “I caught a fish.” And more than once in his memoir, I was put in mind of the story of a man who buys fish but asks the seller to toss them over the counter to him, “so I can tell my wife I caught them.”

He begins with a lengthy history of the Yusupov family — his mother’s family; as she was the last of her line, her sons got her name and titles rather than her husband’s — which sets the tone for the rest of the memoir. Although it is true that the house was founded by a Tartar strategist of Tamerlane’s, and that they could trace their lineage back to the Khans and Hoards, from the 14th century and through such famous rulers as Ivan the Terrible and Catherine the Great, the style of his narrative more than suggests gilding of various lilies.

Felix, whose mother dressed him as a girl until he was four because she was so disappointed to have a son, was famous for outlandish behavior and crossdressing. Yet even though I know the truth of the stories, his style is so boastful and disingenuous that I can’t help but feel lied to. Imagine listening to a drunk old geezer for about four hours straight; he saw interesting things, knows great stories, and you’d like to pick his brain, but he just won’t stop rambling and you can’t help but be bored. That’s this memoir. He has no sense of timeline, wandering one way and then another, rabbit trailing on an anecdote he clearly thinks is just the funniest ever while you try awkwardly to smile because it’s polite.

Felix became the wealthiest Russian at the death of his brother (in an illegal duel with a jealous husband) and married the Tsar’s niece Irina, whom he describes in the same fond language that he uses to describe every room he ever set foot in (well over 15% of this entire book is the color scheme of every hotel, apartment, palace, and home he ever admired). Up until he married her, he was very good friends with Dmitri Pavlovich — whom he sniped in more ways than one. Dmitri was his rival for Irina, and their friendship suffered at Felix’s somewhat unsportsmanlike claiming of her.

Now to the point. Felix made his name, fame, and living on being “the man who killed Rasputin.” And he spends the last quarter of the book building up to the famous night, making no bones about it being all his work while his co-conspirators were barely on the premises; he brushes over their punishment for it and ends the book with a disorderly chapter summing up the various fates of Romanovs. The conclusion is abrupt and unsatisfying, the relatively neat chapters about Rasputin seeming out of place in an otherwise meandering book.

And of course I contend that’s because Felix built his fame on something he didn’t do. To read my conclusions on what actually happened that night to Rasputin, read the rest of my review here on [The Hundredaire Socialite](#)

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## Molly says

An account of one of the men responsible for the killing of Gregory Rasputin. First poison, then the gun. I recommend reading it while listening to Boney M’s disco version of the story on repeat.

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### **Laurie says**

This book is criticised for being historically inaccurate, which it is. However, that does not take away from the fact that this fascinating portrayal of extravagant aristocratic life that is a joy to read and 100% worth your time

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### **Rosemary says**

I don't know enough about the particulars of Russian history to comment on the accuracy of this account, but I get the impression that like many vain people Yusupov's lies tell you more about him than the truth could. Either way this book is wildly entertaining.

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### **Anna says**

This a great source of information for those interested in the Romanovs, but mainly in the story of Rasputin, since Prince Youssourov was the main responsible for his murder. The book is very interesting and informative and the description of the night of Rasputin's murder is thrilling. I think the best thing about this book is that Youssourov doesn't hold back any information and his style of writing is very easy to follow.

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### **Powersamurai says**

I picked this up, because I always loved the Boney M song, Rasputin. I wanted to know more about what happened. Had to wait until half way (or a bit more) into the book to get to that part. The 1st half was more about the imperial family and who married who and who did what. Of course, an autobiography of sorts of Youssourov himself. Not an angel, that's for sure. Before actually reading the book, I read an article that claims that he was not alone in killing Rasputin and that he took full responsibility himself. Recent finds say a British agent (who only gets one or two mentions at the very end) pulled the trigger. What fascinated me was the murder of Rasputin may have triggered the revolution. So was it all Rasputin's fault to start with? "Oh, those Russians!"

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### **Elizabeth says**

Prince Felix - the identity of the notorious, controversial and very provocative, but the key word here is Personality. Yes, with a capital letter. Whatever he was doing was trying on women's dresses, blowing money, accepted a gift of diamonds the size of a walnut, were killed Rasputin or fought for survival in an indifferent Europe - all of it comes easy, charming and graceful.

This book impressed me with its frankness. Before I knew practically nothing about this person, but now I'm pleasantly surprised that actually Felix was a good man, devoted to his country, friends and faith!

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### **Sarah Baker says**

Interesting to get the story from the man himself. But I couldn't like Felix, or sympathize with him as Russia fell apart around him. I had to skip about 100 pages in the middle just to finish the damn thing.

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### **Roxy says**

This guy is basically the real-life Draco Malfoy.

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### **Griffith says**

While there is no question that the Prince Yusupov has a very captivating and entertaining style of writing, he has taken great liberties with the truth. The greatest and most deliberate of the Prince's errors is his account of how his father's tenure as Governor General of Moscow ended.

In his colorful account, the Prince explains how his father was removed from his office shortly after the Sr. Prince Yusupov had gone to Stavka to report on the Anti-German Riots that had just occurred in Moscow to the the Tzar and group of Ministers assembled there. During his report, the Prince who seemed to justify the riots, became so excited that he pounded on the table and shouted about the "German" influence in "High Places."

This outburst was meant to describe the Empress' supposed Pro-German Court Cabal which was supposed to have been headed by Rasputin. Felix tells us with great indignation that as a result of his father's bold patriotism, the senior Prince Yusupov was soon removed from his office as Governor General of Moscow by the insistence of the Empress and Rasputin.

The truth is easily found, however, in both the Czar's letters to the Empress and the Empress' correspondence at the time. The Czar described how the Sr. Prince Yusupov's outburst had cause hilarity among the ministers as Yusupov was consider to be quite excentric even when he wasn't excited. Added to this was the knowledge that the Tsar had gained from a very thorough report of the riots from the Deputy Minster of the Interior who indicated that the riots had possibly been staged and that Prince Yusupov had been lax in his handling of the affair.

As for the Empress, far from wanting Felix' father ["Papa Felix" as Her Majesty referred to him:] removed from his office, she constantly impored Nicky to get the Sr. Prince Yusupov come back from Petrograd, where he had gone into hiding, and return to his post in Moscow. She felt that it was cowardly of him to leave his post during war and felt that it was his wife's doing that he had chose to hide out in Petrograd. It was only after three months of his refusal to return to Moscow that the Czar accepted the Prince Yusupov's resignation.

And it was the Empress that protected Prince Yusupov's honor when news of his retirement in the papers had

been worded in a way as to suggest he was being punished. Through the Empress' pleading, a correction was published in the press.

Felix Yusupov knew all these details, but insisted on reinforcing the slander about the Empress that had been caused by war hysteria.

As for Felix' description of Rasputin and his murder, it is clear from current research that Felix had a field day with the truth.

I suppose the real value of the book is that of its tone, rather than content, for with Felix we are able to hear the authentic aristocratic voice from the Late Imperial period.

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### **Gail says**

While not a must-read for the average person, if you are a fan of the last of the Romanovs and their contemporaries this book gives you an interesting view into the mind of the cross-dressing prince who was richer than the tsar. Once you're past the Youssoupoff family tree in the first few chapters, the memoirs become much more readable.

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### **lyell bark says**

this is a cool book about the lil' russian twink who killed rasputin with a some poison cake [mostly]. but that's not all this book has to offer imho! for example, when prince youssoupoff wasn't killing rasputin he was:

- a) being dressed like a girl as a 4 year old by his mom, yelling "look at pretty baby" from his carriage at the peasants of st. petersburg.
- b) apparently having a 3-some with some argentine dude and his russian girlfriend when he was 12???
- c) whoring around florence with his art teacher
- d) masquerading as a woman to get into nightclubs where high school students [or the impeperial russian equivalents] didn't belong
- e) continuing to masquerade as a female soprano for an apparently successful week long concert run
- f) hanging around in his dad's mid-eastern themed drawing room dressed as a satrap and holding mock executions with his servants
- g) dragging like an entire zoo around the european continent.

also sort of a sad reminder that todays oligarchs of america and russia are fat gross men in crappy brooks brothers suites. it's a real shame that our feudal overlords, whose wealth make the romanovs and their cadet branches look like a piddling little sideshow, aren't nearly as ostentatious with their money. get it together, today's hyper-wealthy world ruling elite.

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### **Ally Kumari says**

Ah, dear Felix! You were artistically gifted, alright, the book is more than readable. But what a fabulous diva you were. Full of sass and self-indulgence. Your memoir reads more like a fiction of which you are undeniably the HERO (pretty much appointed by God to great destiny), when in fact your greatest blessing was being born into a filthy rich and privileged family, rather than any other personal gift or talent of yours. You even treat the assassination of Rasputin as another fun escapade in your awesome existence. Ah Felix. How I enjoy you!

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