

Insidious Siberian (The Prophetic Russian Stone)

"Look, here it is, the prophetic Russian stone! O crafty Siberian. It was always green as hope and only toward evening was it suffused with blood. It was that way from the beginning of the world, but it concealed itself for a long time, lay hidden in the earth, and permitted itself to be found only on the day when Tsar Alexander was declared of age, when a great sorcerer had come to Siberia to find the stone, a magician."

Leskov Nikolai Semyonovich. Alexandrite. 1884



On 17 April 1834, the Russian Empire was celebrating the sixteenth birthday of the future Tsar Alexander II, one of the most controversial characters in Russian history. At around the same time, a color changing [gemstone](#) was found in the Urals's Izumrudnye Kopi (Emerald mines) on the Tokovaya River, 85 versts (96 kilometres) to the east of Ekaterinburg and the noble story of the most scarce and fascinating precious stone was born and irrevocably associated with Alexander II, through being named in his honour -- [Alexandrite](#).

[Alexandrite](#) became symbolic of the reign of Alexander II, and later tsarist Russia in general. The fact that the stone colors of red and green echoed the principal colors of Imperial Russia endeared it to many. Moreover, the magic of the changing colors directly reflected the thoughts of a society ruled by Tsars since 1480, where every written and spoken word had a second meaning and allegory was the main form of expressing notions different from the official ideology.

See Alexandrite Tsarstone collectors guide, The prophetic Russian stone - Alexandrite, <http://www.alexandrite.net/viewpage.html?id=ALXS-002-00004> (History of discovering alexandrite gemstone and the affect it had on the stone's name and the gemstone's value) (as of).

The Tsar Liberator



Fig. 1.: Alexander II - Russian "green morning full of hopes".

The mystical dualism of [Alexandrite](#) lies within Tsar Alexander II's figure who ascended the throne during Russia's defeat in the Crimean War of 1855. The early part of his reign was characterised by sweeping reforms and his liberal approach earned him the title of "Tsar Liberator". The green of Alexandrite in daylight was taken to represent the hope and revival brought to Russia by Alexander II's efforts. "Green morning full of hopes" came into the lives of many when Alexander II emancipated the serfs and initiated the transformation of the flagging agrarian Russian economy into an industrial state.

Unfortunately, freeing the serfs led to its own problems. They were allowed either to buy the land on which they worked or to go to one of the big cities to seek work in factories. Those who purchased their land were tied to it by forty-nine year mortgage payments, which were often unfair because of overvaluation of land to maximise profits for the nobility. Many felt cheated at having to buy land they thought was already rightfully theirs. Even worse, around four million domestic serfs were emancipated without land and had no way of supporting themselves. Violent demonstrations resulted and in their first four months of freedom, the serfs rioted 647 times and the first blood was shed along with the hope.

During this period, pressure was being exerted upon Alexander II to act more decisively and to take his reforms to their logical conclusion, - a parliament or a constitution, but he refused to go this far and gradually adopted a more reactionary stance. But it was too late; the liberal genie was already out of the bottle weakening his authority and people were beginning to question Tsarism. Alexander II responded and between 1855 and 1875, about 250,000 people were exiled to Siberia. Large meetings were banned, and the secret police and agents provocateurs were used to apprehend those who would not accept the Tsar's authority.

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Ironically, Alexander II's liberalization and shift to a policy of reaction later in his reign was vital in breeding the Russian revolutionary movement that ultimately brought the end to the Russian Imperial family and the fall of the Russian Empire. The hope was tainted by blood and many believed that the red of [Alexandrite](#) under candlelight prophesied the forthcoming "bloody evening" for the Third Rome where Alexander II was the first royal sacrifice.

Bloody evening



Fig. 2.: Alexander II laying upon the snow, profusely bleeding, abandoned by all of his followers.

On March 13, 1881 in St. Petersburg during his visit to the Grand Duchess Catherine, Alexander II travelled in a closed carriage, from Michaelovsky Palace to the Winter Palace accompanied by an armed Circassian who sat with the coach-driver. Six Circassians followed on horseback with a group of police officers in sledges behind. On a street corner, Nikolai Rysakov and Timofei Mikhailov threw bombs at Tsar's ironclad carriage. The bombs missed the carriage and landed amongst the Circassians. Rysakov, who threw the bomb, was arrested on the spot. Alexander II was injured and his coachman advised him not to get out but he felt that his military dignity required him to see the wounded. When he approached the arrested terrorist and spoke to him a man named Ignatij Grinevitskiy, a member of the People's Will, threw a bomb between himself and Alexander II and both of them were killed.

The explosion literally ripped Alexander II to pieces. One of his legs was blown away and the other shattered to the top of his thigh. Even his clothes were torn to rags. And there, Alexander II lay motionless upon the snow, profusely bleeding... dying. Red color. Color of blood and revolution. Color of the evening and the color of [Alexandrite](#) in candle light.

Russia was a highly superstitious society. Religious icons credited with direct powers of intervention remained a magnetic focus for believers. Amulets and talismans were commonly

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worn and used, and the symbolism of a [gemstone](#) discovered in the reign of a Tsar, who offered hope and freedom alongside battles of blood, was clear. After Alexander's death, [Alexandrite](#) became especially popular amongst monarchists. They wore rings with it, quite often with a [diamond](#) on each side symbolising the two main acts of Alexander II -- the cancellation of serfdom and the new judicial administration.

On July 17, 1918, Nicholas the Bloody (Nicholas II), the last Tsar to reign over Russia, was executed along with his family without trial by firing squad and finished off by bayonets, in the basement of the Ipatiev House where they had been imprisoned.

Red Horse



Fig. 3.: An ominous foreshadowing of Imperial Russia.

The detachment of Bolsheviks led by Yakov Yurovsky began preparations early in the day. At about 11 pm on 16 July, the revolvers were handed out and the announcement made that the prisoners were to be liquidated. The Royal family was wakened and told they were to be photographed. The family was led to a room in the basement and ordered to stand along the wall. Chairs were brought in and Alexandra and Alexei sat down. Nicholas II was shot first and then firing began in earnest but bullets began to ricochet and the firing intensified. When the firing stopped, Nicholas II's daughters, Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia, Alexandra, and Alexei were covered in blood, but still alive. Shooting began again and Alexei was killed, but although Nicholas II's daughters were shot, they were still alive. One man resorted to a bayonet, but that didn't work. Finally, they were all shot in the head.

When the men came to undress the bodies, they found that Alexandra, Olga, Tatiana, Maria, and Anastasia were wearing bodices made almost entirely of diamonds, emeralds, alexandrites and other precious stones and gold jewels, a luxury body armour made by their mother Alexandra for a rainy day.

See Alexandrite Tzarstone collectors guide, The prophetic Russian stone - Alexandrite, <http://www.alexandrite.net/viewpage.html?id=ALXS-002-00004> (History of discovering alexandrite gemstone and the affect it had on the stone's name and the gemstone's value) (as of).

From the Tsar Liberator who brought green morning full of hopes to the last Tsar, Nicholas the Bloody facing the last days of the Tsarist Russia, the story had turned full circle as the last of Romanovs lay in blood and gemstones in the very place where the symbol of their grandfather had been discovered. Like the supplies of [alexandrite](#) which had been reduced to almost nothing by the turn of the twentieth century, the last of the Russian nobility and monarchists also disappeared in exile and in Soviet labour camps.

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