

Michael, Tsar of Russia

“Michael! Michael!” Abram raced into his friend’s room. “Michael, The Assembly of the Land is looking for you. Representatives have arrived from Moscow and are heading here right now!”

Michael’s brows shot up into his forehead. “What would they want with me?!”

Abram put his hand on his friend’s shoulder. “Did you forget that your grandfather, Nikita, was the uncle of the last tsar of the Rurik dynasty? You are related.”

“That’s of no matter. I don’t have an education.” Michael paced the room with nervous energy. “My mother and I live in a monastery. My father was forced to become a monk. He’s now in Poland. What would they want with me?”

Just then, Michael was summoned by his mother to come to the courtyard.

Michael and Abram were met by a group of men.

One of the group came forward. “Michael Fyodorovich Romanov, the assembly has met to choose a new tsar. Our land is in internal chaos, we are being invaded by foreign lands, and since the death of tsar Fyodor I, there has been a quick series of rulers. We need stability in our land. We want you to be the new ruler of Russia.”

Michael looked at his mother then at Abram. Thoughts pounded through his head. “But . . . but, I’m not qualified. How can I rule a land such as ours?”

“Michael,” said his mother. “You are 16 years old. You are old enough. You must answer Russia’s call.”

“I don’t know.” Michael looked at Abram again, hoping his friend could help.

Abram moved close to Michael. “You have rulership in your blood,” he whispered. “And no doubt your mother’s family will help you with governmental affairs.”

Michael lowered his head. He looked at the ground as if it could make up his mind for him. Finally, he looked up. “I would prefer not having to do this, but I must fulfill this request to honor my family.”

The representatives discussed plans with Michael for several days, then they returned to Moscow.

Four months later, on July 21, 1613, Michael was crowned Michael Tsar of Russia. He became the first tsar in the Romanov dynasty, a dynasty that reigned until 1917.

Questions

1. What did the representatives want with Michael?
2. How did Michael feel about being asked to be the tsar?
3. What is a dynasty?
4. What was the name of Michael's dynasty?