

June 1, 2020

Dear Rising Seventh Graders and Parents,

Welcome to summer and reading for pleasure. Our goal is to create lifelong readers and to build a community of readers. The required reading is *The Family Romanov* by Candace Fleming (Schwartz & Wade Books; ISBN 978-0-375-86782-8)

The Family Romanov is set in St. Petersburg, Russia and follows the last tsarist family during the turbulent first years of the 20th century. This will lead us directly into the fall trimester when we begin by studying the Bolshevik Revolution and the rise of Stalinism.

In Humanities, one of our goals is to identify many perspectives of history and to make the established narrative more human and less simplistic. In other words, knowing why a story is being told is as important as knowing what the story is about. Please keep the following Essential Questions in mind as you read this book. In the first few days of school, we will review these questions and then give you a chance to creatively express what you've learned. If you choose to read this text early on in the summer, make sure you review it in the days before Wednesday, September 2nd (our first day of school).

Essential Questions for *The Family Romanov*:

- What was daily life like for the Tsar Nicholas and his family? What was life like for the peasants?
- What key events and conditions led the Russians to revolt?
- What were the goals of the revolutionaries?
- How did life change after the revolution?
- What other historical examples are comparable to the Russian Revolution?
- How might this era in Russian history inform us about autocratic rule?

In addition, students are encouraged to read two or more other works. You can visit **Oakwood Connected** and click on the **SS Library Resources** tile for a list of other books. Click on the **Topics** tab and then **Summer Reading**. You will see a summer reading list for 7th grade which is filled with a variety of levels, styles, and genres, and contains interests for everyone. Use your own discretion, your expert librarians and booksellers, reviews, and your own good judgment to make your selections. Remember that summer may be one of those rare opportunities to choose your own reading. Take advantage of that opportunity: pursue new worlds, meet unusual characters, consider philosophies that support your own beliefs—and challenge them. As you begin your adventures in summer reading, please feel free to suggest additional titles. These summer readings will be shared with peers beginning in the first week of school, and there will be assessments on *Family Romanov*. If you have questions, please email Nechelle Wong-Littman, Humanities Department Chair at nwong@oakwoodschool.org

Wishing you a relaxing summer,

Nechelle Wong-Littman, Justin Sweitzer, and Claire Tulis