

Ivan Grozny IV – The Awesome, The Dread, The Terrible



7 Curses of Ivan IV – Curse One (Dad Dies)

- Ivan's father (Vasily II) dies when Ivan is just 3 due to a pimple
 - Ivan's only brother is a deaf-mute
 - Vasily chooses Ivan to rule with mom until Ivan was at the age of 15
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Curse Two – Mom is poisoned

- Boyars refuse to recognize Ivan as Tsar of Russia
 - Ivan's mother Elena enlisted help of trusted boyars.
 - She was able to preserve Ivan's rule until he was 7 – (4 years)
 - She was poisoned by the boyars.
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Curse three – Cruelty of the Boyars

- “Before Ivan became the terrible he started off as the terrified.”
 - Boyars neglected and abused him.
 - Some molested him.
 - He was completely isolated.
 - Wore rags and treated like a prisoner.
 - Only paid attention to when needed for ceremony.
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Curse three – Cruelty of the Boyars

- He watched murders, beatings, verbal and physical abuse regularly.
 - Ivan took out his frustrations by torturing animals which he fantasized were the boyars.
 - When he became of age he picked Anastasia Romanov as his wife “because she was a sound sleeper.”
 - He finally gets away from the Boyars
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Curse Four – His son Dimitri Dies

- Ivan IV tours the countryside with his wife and son... his son Dmitri (heir to the throne) dies while playing in a stream.
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Curse Five – Anastasia Dies

- Anastasia calmed the beast.
 - She gives Ivan another son, Ivan Jr.
 - Then she dies of a strange illness. Most think she was poisoned.
 - Ivan thought the boyars were up to their old tricks.
 - He went back to being a very angry, cruel Tsar.
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Curse Six – Ivan becomes insane

- Ivan thought the boyars had killed his wife so he let loose a massive wave of torture and executions.
 - He setup the Oprichnina which became a separate police force.
 - Dressed in black and rode black horses (death)
 - Had saddles with two emblems
 - a) Broom to sweep Russia clean
 - b) Dog head signifying the watchful Tsar
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Curse Six – Ivan becomes insane

- In 1570, Ivan massacred the 60,000 citizens of Novgorod on suspicion of treason
 - “So many bodies clogged the Volkhov river that it overflowed the banks and the water turned red.”
 - He forced the highest priests of Russia to have dinner with him in the courtyard with the heads of his victims on spikes around the table.
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Curse six – Ivan goes insane

- He has St. Basil's Cathedral built – it is so beautiful he refuses to let the architect build anything further.
 - He personally gouges out the eyeballs of the man who made it.
 - Ivan would have orgies with the Oprichina where they would torture and kill enemies of the Tsar.
 - Ivan had the entire town of Pskov skinned alive.
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Curse Seven – Ivan Kills his Son

- He insulted his son's wife who was pregnant
 - Ivan Jr. confronted him for his nasty mood
 - Ivan Sr. struck his son on the head in a violent fit of rage
 - Ivan Jr. the only heir to the throne, dies.
 - This shocked Ivan so deeply that he never slept properly again. He would roam the palace at night in terrible remorse and suffered from horrible headaches.
 - He drank mercury to cure his headaches – it likely is what killed him.
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The good things of Ivan IV

- The years he was married to Anastasia was a time of enlightenment for Russia.
 - Ivan opened trade with England and France.
 - He defeated the Swedes, Lithuania and Denmark on the battlefield.
 - He brought in a ton of western europe artisans to teach his people trades (metal work, gun making, ship building, typography)
 - Brought in many foreign teachers and opened schools.
 - Many government reforms
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Ivan IV Government Reforms

■ Zemskii Sobor (Meeting of the Land)

1. Nobility
2. Holy leaders
3. Merchants and townsfolk

Decided controversial issues and matters of state security that Ivan IV felt needed input from the people.

Credited as being the first official parliament of Russia.

Ivan IV Reforms

- Council of 100 Chapters
 - Ivan posed 100 questions to the clergy of Russia.
 - After they all met and discussed the questions in Moscow, their answers were recorded in a book.
 - The result was a manual for the Russian peasant on how to be a good Russian Orthodox Christian.
 - This would later be used as a manual for the 'Old Believers' under Peter the Great
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Ivan IV Reforms

■ Subebnik of 1550

- An update to his grandfathers Subednik
 - A product of Ivan IV and the Zemskii Sobor
 - Asserted Russia was ruled by an 'enlightened Tsar'
 - Allowed peasants to leave their fuedal lands freely (change from Ivan III)
 - Allowed local governments with elected officials
 - Very Western
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Ivan IV Reforms

- Streltsy
 - Secret service for the Tsar
 - Armed guards
 - Used Cossacks to conquer half of Siberia
 - Expanded Russia's size by 4x
 - Then during his reign of terror he took it all back – waged war against the very systems he had put in place.
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