**Ipatiev House or the House of Special Purpose**

Silence. The air around me is still and cold. Whispers of the past tug at me, they pull at my clothing as if trying to show me something. The whispers lead me down a set of stairs and down a long hallway, finally showing me into a medium sized, empty room. While the room appears to be normal, the air has an eerie quality to it. It seems as if it is trying to tell me that something important happened here. I know the atrocity that occurred here in this room. I know how during the civil war, the local Red general made an executive decision. He decided their existence was a risk to their cause. He gave the order, and the family was brought down on the pretence of having their picture taken. I can almost hear them asking for the chairs. Rumour has it they did actually take a picture of them. Personally, I have never seen it but the possibility of its existence is too tempting to resist. Now they are seated, or standing. They pose for the photo, and after it is taken the general enters the room. He tells them they are sentenced to death for crimes against Russia. Tears come to my eyes. One by one they roll down my cheeks. Though I cannot see any of this happening, I can feel it in my heart of hearts. There is shock now. The Tsar stands in protest, but there is nothing he can do. The family watches helplessly as a row of soldiers file in. They are all armed with guns and bayonets. The tears drip off my chin, hitting the ground with the tiniest of splashes. I do not notice for I am too caught up in a memory which isn’t mine. They open fire. Screams fill the room, I can feel the terror. First to go is the Tsar. I feel him fade away as if I was there. Next to go is the Tsarina and the servants. Among the final deaths are the Grand Duchesses. Later they would discover that they had sewn diamonds and other precious stones into their clothing, which was why the bullets were deflected. Their death came by bayonet. My heart aches for them, these people I never knew. Their pain and suffering draws me in once more to the nightmare that became their end. Little Alexei had somehow survived, but not for long. A soldier stepped forward and shot him point blank. The tears come more quickly now, drip dropping to the floor in unsteady streams. I had known the story when I dared enter here. I had learned all about it, and somehow that was nothing. Being here, feeling it happen, feeling every shot and stab rip through me and me still standing there, crying and alive was… There is a thing Stalin once said. “You cannot make an omelette without smashing a few eggs.” This is true. It may have been necessary to kill the Romanovs, but that still doesn’t excuse the horrible atrocity those soldiers committed that day. A final tear drips down my cheek. The feeling is gone now. All that is left is a room. A room with a terrible, terrible past.