

Important historical assassinations are usually aggressively analyzed by historians for their implications on the broader scale and the manner, if any, in which they affected the course of events to follow. The so-called “Mayerling Incident” that resulted in the death of Hapsburg Crown Prince Rudolf and his mistress Baroness Mary Vetsera is typically given a passing mention to this effect – focusing on the incident in the context of the reign of Rudolf’s father, Emperor Francis Joseph, and European politics at the time. This focus, while understandable, has served to downplay the mystery of the Mayerling Incident.

On January 30, 1889, Crown Prince Rudolph was found dead at his Mayerling hunting lodge along with his mistress, Vetsera, and the government quickly reported to the masses that he had suffered from fatal heart failure. This story, however, was met with much skepticism. Crown Prince Rudolph was known to have been engaging in an extramarital affair with Vetsera, and his sudden death thus aroused suspicion amongst the populace. Soon the autopsy evidence emerged that both Rudolph and Vetsera died from gunshot wounds, leading to rumors and ultimately a statement by the crown that Rudolph had committed suicide. A popular theory was that the lovers had agreed to commit suicide together after Emperor Francis Joseph ordered them to discontinue their relationship, or that the crown prince was murdered for failure to comply with such an order. But the mystery of the incident has led to continued speculation, and while most modern scholars believe the incident to be a confined murder or suicide, some believed the Mayerling Incident, as it came to be known, was secretly an inter-dynastic murder of a troublemaking family member, or alternatively, was committed by anti-Hapsburg terrorists who disguised the incident.

It is odd that the latter of these views has not received more support from historians. The Hapsburgs in the 19<sup>th</sup> century ruled an empire that was arguably an ancient and doddering relic, sweeping across a broad plethora of cultures and ethnolinguistic groups who lacked common unity. Peoples like the Czechs and Hungarians resented foreign rule of their lands by the Hapsburgs, that latter of whom were granted autonomy in the compromise of 1867. The tension often manifested in hostilities, beginning with an attempt on the emperor’s life in 1853. The Emperor Francis Joseph’s wife, Elisabeth of Bavaria, was stabbed to death by an Italian anarchist in 1898, and the assassination of his nephew, Francis Ferdinand, famously sparked a war with Serbia, Russia, and ultimately World War I, a defeat in which would cause the end of the Hapsburg dynasty a few years later. As Francis Joseph put it himself after Francis Ferdinand’s death, “nothing at all is to be spared of me.” While the existence adulterous relationship of the Crown Prince with Mary Vetsera might support the claim that the deaths of the two at Mayerling were inflicted by either or by

agents of the Hapsburg Monarchy, it also supports the less popular theory of a political assassination, given the ease of using the Crown Prince’s mistress as a cover-up.

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20. Which one of the following best expresses the main idea of the passage?
- (A) The Mayerling Incident, wherein Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria and his mistress suffered their deaths, was one of several assassinations of Hapsburg royalty that had important political implications.
  - (B) While well known for its historical ramifications, the details and mystery of the death of Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria have often been overlooked, as has the possibility that the incident was more than a simple internal murder or suicide.
  - (C) Historians have focused too much on the broader historical ramifications of the death of Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria, and ignore the compelling forensic evidence that traditional accounts of the story are wrong.
  - (D) The deaths of Crown Prince Rudolph and Maria Vetsera in what was known as the “Mayerling Incident” was an important event that greatly influenced European politics in the late 1800s.
  - (E) While commonly thought of as a simple internal murder or suicide, the Mayerling Incident was in fact almost certainly carried out by anti-Hapsburg terrorists, perhaps similar to those who were complicit in other anti-Hapsburg assassinations.
21. The author mentions the “broad plethora of cultures and ethnolinguistic groups” (line 40) primarily in order to
- (A) illustrate the details of the empire over which the Hapsburgs ruled
  - (B) show the uncertainty as to the ethnicity of the assassin who killed Empress Elizabeth
  - (C) explain why many people were hostile to the rule of the Hapsburgs in the 1800s to the point of engaging in acts of terrorism
  - (D) rebut a claim made by the historians in the first paragraph
  - (E) introduce a point that the author will later elaborate upon

22. Which one of the following is not mentioned in the passage as an explanation given for the death of Crown Prince Rudolph?
- (A) heart failure
  - (B) suicide after being told he must not see his mistress
  - (C) assassination by a terrorist
  - (D) suicide after not being able to live with himself, having killed his mistress
  - (E) murder for failing to obey an order from his father, the emperor
23. The primary purpose of the third paragraph is to
- (A) elaborate on one theory espoused in the previous paragraph
  - (B) provide evidence that a thesis laid out in the first paragraph is correct
  - (C) address a counterargument offered by the historians in the first paragraph
  - (D) give an example of the European political events mentioned in the first paragraph
  - (E) cast doubt on the first official account of the Mayerling Incident
24. Which one of the following would cast the most doubt on the explanation for the Crown Prince Rudolph's death as a suicide as described in the line 25?
- (A) forensic evidence showed that, although the couple died in each other's presence, Rudolph died many hours after his mistress
  - (B) documents suggesting Rudolph's affair with his mistress was not well known except amongst government officials
  - (C) a letter written by Emperor Francis Joseph scolding Rudolph for his affair
  - (D) documents of church officials refusing to grant Rudolph a divorce so he could marry his mistress
  - (E) a short poem written from Rudolph to his mistress expressing his love for her
25. Which one of the following best describes the author's attitude toward the theory mentioned in lines 35-35?
- (A) blatant disagreement
  - (B) abrupt dismissal
  - (C) grudging skepticism
  - (D) open-minded reception
  - (E) overwhelming confidence
26. Which one of the following can be properly inferred from the passage?
- (A) Francis Joseph was the last Hapsburg emperor to rule for many years.
  - (B) World War I would have been significantly less likely to happen had it not been for the Mayerling Incident.
  - (C) Rudolph was the last Crown Prince of the Hapsburg dynasty.
  - (D) All important members of the Hapsburg dynasty were targeted by terrorists.
  - (E) At the time immediately after the Mayerling Incident, most people believed it to be a simple, confined murder or suicide.

## STOP

IF YOU FINISH BEFORE TIME IS CALLED, YOU MAY CHECK YOUR WORK ON THIS SECTION ONLY.  
DO NOT WORK ON ANY OTHER SECTION IN THE TEST.