

Lesson 8

READ THIS STORY #1, Advanced

Carl Fabergé

Carl Fabergé was a master goldsmith. He took over his father's workshop in St. Petersburg when he was twenty-four. His brother joined them when he became twenty. The company gained prominence. New workshops were added, and more skilled craftsmen were employed.

Then the House of Fabergé received a commission from the Russian royal family to design an Easter Egg. The first egg was such a success that the company received a permanent order to produce one new Imperial Egg every year. Each egg was unique and contained some "surprise" element that reminded the family of a special event. The surprise was a heavily guarded secret and was not disclosed until Mr. Fabergé presented the egg to the royal family.

It is believed that fifty-four gold-encrusted, enameled and jeweled eggs were created. The Coronation Coach egg and the mosaic egg are the two most famous and exquisite designs.

In 1917, due to the Russian revolution, the royal court was dissolved. Fabergé closed his business. He became an émigré in Switzerland, where he died in 1920.

Some of the Imperial Eggs were sold by Soviet commissars. A few remain in Russia, several are in American museums, and at least ten are held in private collections.