Marriage Politics in Early Modern Russia, by Russell E. Martin

From 1505 to 1689, Russia's tsars chose their wives through a ceremony known as the "bride-show." Martin vividly shows how the tsars personally selected their brides from amongst their subjects—often insulting to the women and families of the candidates. He deftly combines narrative history with cultural analysis, re-creating the political landscape of early modern Russia through a new lens. In Russia's People of Empire: Life Stories from Eurasia, 1500 to Present, Martin says "We know much about the tsars, but little about the many people who populated the empire that the tsars presided over. By focusing on ordinary people rather than on the tsars, I have tried to recall the voices of Russia's people and to see them as active, not passive figures in the history they created."