



Marie Antoinette: The Courageous End

Margaret Anne MacLeod

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Did the shameless, sex-mad Marie Antoinette deserve to be guillotined? The Parisians thought so. What would you have thought if you had been there in 1792? Whose side would you have been on? The side of 7,000 French aristocrats and the awesome Austrian and Prussian armies advancing on Paris to raze it to the ground, wreaking destruction across France as they advanced? Or the side of the starving people, fighting to protect their brand new parliament and their brand new rights to liberty, equality and brotherhood?

Whose side would you have been on? Who would you have been marching with?

What would you have thought of your deceitful king, Louis XVI, and his spendthrift wife Marie Antoinette, who had secretly invited these formidable German armies to march on Paris – to restore their absolute monarchy and annihilate all your new rights? Would you have stormed Marie Antoinette's palace with the downtrodden people? Would you have guillotined her?

As the shrieking Parisians stormed their palace, the apathetic Louis waited for death. while Marie Antoinette fought valiantly for her life. She wanted to live – for the sake of her darling son, whom she burned to see on the throne of France. Not to mention her darling comte Axel de Fersen, the handsome Swedish nobleman she had fallen in love with 18 years before. Yes, 36 year old Marie Antoinette had loved the dashing Fersen for 18 years, because her hopeless, sweet, liar of a husband – was never man enough for the tragic queen. Find out why in this book.

The furious Parisians stormed Marie Antoinette's palace and imprisoned her. And this once thoughtless, pleasure seeking queen transformed herself into the courageous, admirable queen she should always have been. But it was too late to save her life and her throne. If only she had changed while she still had time. If only the people had got to know the new admirable queen.

Share Marie Antoinette's agony as she dutifully remained at the side of her hopeless, sweet, liar of a husband, as the Parisians stormed her palace. Witness the last heart-breaking meeting between Marie Antoinette and her husband – before he was led off to the guillotine. Experience her anguish on the day they wrenched her shrieking little boy (now a child-king) out of her arms – forever. Feel for her 14 year old daughter on the night the callous revolutionaries came for Marie Antoinette. No wonder the queen's beauty had faded! No wonder her hair had begun to turn white!

This book reveals Marie Antoinette as you've never known her. Forget the beautiful, smiling, thoughtless, pleasure seeking queen forever dancing at some glittering, magnificent ball. Meet the other Marie Antoinette – tormented throughout her harrowing imprisonment.

And will this chilling but ultimately life affirming novel about the agonising last year of Marie Antoinette's turbulent life make you change your mind about the tragic queen?

Based on contemporary accounts, and with characters (most of whom were actual historical personages) speaking the very words they recalled in their memoirs.

Includes as extras: 20 pages of snippets from Marie Antoinette's letters to her beloved comte Axel de Fersen,

the love of her life – “I love you with all my heart.” Should she have given him up? After all, the people called her a whore because of this love.

And extracts from the memoir by Marie Therese, Marie Antoinette’s traumatised daughter – detailing the brutality she endured after the execution of her mother: “Her soul was separated from her body, and ascended to receive its reward in the bosom of our merciful Creator.

Marie Antoinette: The Courageous End Details

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From Reader Review Marie Antoinette: The Courageous End for online ebook

Ella James says

Marie Antoinette: The Courageous End, written by Margaret Anne MacLeod, tells the story of the last Queen of France, Marie Antoinette, and her life during the French Revolution and her eventual gruesome demise by guillotine. Known mainly for her historical reputation as the fun-loving, exuberant, beautiful, petite, and perhaps promiscuous wife of King Louis XVI, this amazing book gives a different view of the Queen, and a detailed and well-researched insight into the life of a once powerful and revered woman. Married at age fourteen to a man who was to become king, Marie Antoinette appears to have replaced her unfulfilled marital expectations with lovers and the high life, having discovered from the outset that Louis was a weak and uninteresting spouse. But that changes as Marie finds her inner strength to protect the throne, the king, and their children, from those who had had enough of a queen who had, for years, squandered their hard-earned taxes.

Marie Antoinette: The Courageous End takes the reader into the eighteenth century world of a woman who left her wild side behind and strived to save her family and her loyal friends, servants, and protectors. True, there is a man who has won her heart and who she loved for many years, but the reader is led to understand the queen's heart, to applaud her loyalty, and to empathize with her devastation at her lost love. History tells us of the sad end to this story, for the queen and for her family, but this book is written with such emotion and passion that the reader is left heartbroken for her. It is a story that will linger in the mind of the reader, and perhaps offer some compassion for an infamous queen who held her head high to the end.

The writing style of the author, Margaret Anne MacLeod, is very appealing, with short, punchy sentences that add to the fluidity and pace of the writing. Clearly well researched, this is a memorable and exceptionally well written account of the life of Marie Antoinette from the age of fourteen, focusing more on her struggles some years later. The descriptions of the settings, the characters, and the betrayals of the era are incredible, and the authenticity of the work is enhanced by the excerpts of some of Marie Antoinette's love letters to Axel de Fersen, and from a memoir written by her daughter. All in all, Marie Antoinette: The Courageous End is an excellent book and highly recommended. Although almost four hundred pages in length, this reader completed the book in three days, unable to leave the story until the very end.

Margaret MacLeod says

My book (in paperback and Kindle) is available on Amazon worldwide.

See my website for a dramatised film about the book (15 minutes), blogs and portraits of many of the characters in the book, most of whom were real people, known and loved by Marie Antoinette, who shared the ordeal of her last year with her: <https://www.marieantoinettethecourage...>

My novel is based on my fascinating research over the past 20 years, and my translation of many sources, such as the secret letters between Marie Antoinette and her anxious mother Maria Theresa, empress of Austria [see my other book]. These revealing letters begin from the moment the naive 14 year old arrived at Versailles in 1770, as bride for the 15 year old orphaned crown prince, and end 10 years later, by which time Marie Antoinette had been queen for 6 years. The last letter ends just 9 short years before the Revolution

exploded into being.

The book includes 4 Appendices, which set the novel in context.

Appendix 1: Correspondence of Marie Antoinette and Fersen. (30 pages)

♥?♠?Marie Antoinette to Fersen: “How are you, I bet you’re not even looking after yourself.” And: “Adieu, I love you with all my heart.”

Fersen’s diary: “It is agonising to think that she was alone in her last moments, with no one to console her, with no one to confide in, with no one to whom she could pass on her last thoughts. I am overwhelmed with it all.” ♥?♠?

Appendix 2: Extracts from the memoir by the broken hearted Marie Therese, citing the request made every day for 2 and a half years by the young girl, who didn’t know that her mother had been guillotined. (15 pages)

♥?♠?I begged Chaumette to let me rejoin my mother: ‘That’s not my decision,’ he replied. ♥?♠?

Appendix 3: Report about Marie Antoinette’s disturbed and orphaned young son, after he had endured a year of solitary imprisonment.

♥?♠?Still the same fixed look and the same attention, but he spoke not a word. His resigned and indifferent expression seemed to say: ‘What does it matter to me? Despatch your victim.’ ♥?♠?

Appendix 4: Exhumation of Marie Antoinette from her secret, unmarked grave.

♥?♠?We found some remains of a woman’s garments, notably two elastic garters in a fair state of preservation...The precious remains were covered with a pall and surrounded with tapers. ♥?♠?

Who was Marie Antoinette? Why was she so hated that she was forced to endure the ordeal of a public execution, driven in a farm cart to the scaffold - accompanied by the shrieks of the mob? Will this book change your opinion of the ill-fated queen?

Extract 1:

♥?♠?Mrs Deficit. That was what the people called her. They had paid for her to party. Their children died of starvation so that she could party. That was why they hated her..... ♥?♠?

Why had the queen partied? Did it have anything to do with her agony at her childlessness, while her many gloating sisters produced baby after baby? Did it have anything to do with her husband Louis XVI's flat refusal to have the remedial operation to whip off his overly tight foreskin, and allow him to impregnate Marie Antoinette?

Extract 2:

♥?♠?After seven years of waiting for this king to do his marital duty, Maria Theresa had had enough. She agreed that her son Joseph could come to France.

Yes, the formidable emperor Joseph was coming to call. And there was nowhere left for Louis to hide! Maria Theresa told Joseph to do whatever it took to get Louis onto the operating table. Whatever it took to get this reluctant husband to do his duty. It was a task the formidable Joseph was looking forward to!

His darling little sister had had nothing but trouble with this dummkopf for years. He would sort him out. No worries.

Thirty six year old Joseph told his brother Leopold that if young Louis persisted in refusing to have the operation, he would stand over his sister and brother-in-law while they were going at it, and whip Louis until he ejaculated out of sheer terror.

And love every minute of it.

It wasn't necessary.

One look at the dangerous glint in his brother-in-law's eyes, persuaded Louis that the game was up. He guessed that Joseph was prepared to perform the operation himself. By force. With the bluntest knife he could find. And as much sawing action as required. Possibly a bit more than required.

Louis sensibly elected to have a surgeon perform the necessary operation.

So, Louis was held down, tied down, plied with brandy. They needed lots of men to hold him down. After all he had been building up his muscles with all that building work! There was screeching. Wriggling. Wriggling was not at all advised. Try not to wriggle. "Bring me more brandy. Whisky. Absinthe. Anything. Everything. Quick." He had to be held down. Tied down. The pain was excruciating.

The surgeon deftly whipped off Louis' overly tight foreskin. Just a little snip. Or two. Or more than two. And it was over. Now he would be able to ejaculate. At last.

Louis was drunk for quite a while. Had a helluva hangover for quite a while. Was sore for quite a while. Had swelling for quite a while.

But when the swelling and the soreness settled down, the couple began to spend time alone together, in Louis' bedroom. During the day. With all the doors locked. It was unheard of! And afterwards Louis told his aunt Adelaide that he wished he had had the operation before, because intercourse was now so pleasurable!

What had stopped him, you might ask? What had stopped him for all these years?

And Louis had even told Joseph before he had the operation that he adored Marie Antoinette and would do anything for her. Ah – not quite anything, Louis. Not the operation your wife had wanted you to have for years. The doctors had wanted you to have for years. All of France and all of Austria had wanted you to have for years. Not that.

A couple of months after the operation, Marie Antoinette became pregnant. And immediately miscarried.

Her mother Maria Theresa consoled her. At least they knew now it was possible. She would keep her fingers crossed it would happen again. But the queen slipped back into her bad old ways. She went out to party at eleven o'clock. The king slipped back into his bad old ways. He went to bed at eleven o'clock and fell asleep. When on earth would this couple get together to make babies?

Maria Theresa was furious with both of them, but especially with Louis. He had kept them waiting for so long. He had better not keep them waiting another seven years! Joseph was waiting! Ready. His bags packed. Raring to go.

But, miracle of miracles, a few months later, Marie Antoinette became pregnant again. With Marie Therese. It must have been the afternoon sessions. Louis could breathe a sigh of relief. No more visits.....♥?♠?

And what of Marie Antoinette's husband, Louis XVI? Was this king really a simpleton, as believed by many politicians of the time? [See the memoir by mayor Petion relating to the failed attempt by the royal family to escape from revolutionary France, a year before the deposition of Louis XVI, on my website.] Others argued that Louis XVI was a saint.

Extract 3:

♥?♠? “For two days I have been able to think of nothing else but whether, during the course of my reign, I have merited the slightest reproach from my subjects. Well Monsieur de Malesherbes, as a man about to appear before God, I declare to you, in all sincerity, that I have always wanted my people to be happy, and I have always striven to achieve this. Not once have I ever entertained any idea which was inconsistent with this heartfelt desire.”♥?♠?

These were almost the final words to his lawyer, Malesherbes. Louis XVI had embroiled France in a war which was to last for 20 years, span most of Western Europe and cause millions of deaths over these years. Was there some lack of joined-up thinking in this king, who seemed unable to understand the consequences of his actions, and take responsibility for them? How did marriage to such a will o' the wisp, frustrating, changeable character affect Marie Antoinette's behaviour? Would we perhaps diagnose this king nowadays as being on the spectrum?

In fact, Louis's behaviour was even more lethal for his wife in another area - from the moment the 19 year old gangly, self conscious youth became king, he failed to protect his queen and didn't even seem to have the capacity to understand the need to protect her from the sharks at court, circling to attack the beautiful 18 year old. Of course, it didn't help that the gorgeous Marie Antoinette had met the equally gorgeous comte Axel de Fersen, just weeks before she became queen - and had fallen madly in love with him - rumours were rife at Versailles.

Extract 4:

♥?♠?Everyone knew that the crown prince – now king – wasn't up to much. They knew he hadn't been able to consummate his marriage. Marie Antoinette was still a virgin. After four years of marriage.

Was it surprising that the young beauty was attracted to this handsome young Swede?

It was a new reign. A new start. What was going to happen between this nondescript young king and his beautiful young queen? The omens didn't look good. Even the old king had said smugly before he had died: “After me, everything'll go to hell.”

Comte de Creutz, the Swedish ambassador to France, told young Fersen to leave France immediately, if not sooner. Everyone was talking about the beautiful young queen, and how she had not been able to take her eyes off the handsome young eighteen year old Swede. He would have to go.

Axel left France.

Weeks later, the very first scandalous book appeared, detailing Marie Antoinette's love of sex, and her numerous lovers. Louis, the new king, found it amusing. Marie Antoinette found it devastating. Maria Theresa was outraged by the slurs it contained about her innocent young daughter. "So, this is how the French show their love for my daughter. My poor innocent queen."

It was only the first of many such books.

The duc d'Aiguillon was soon discovered to be behind this first publication. Marie Antoinette, the new queen, had had him dismissed from office because of the lies he had told the old king about her.

The comte de Maurepas, the new king's new prime minister, was d'Aiguillon's uncle. He persuaded Louis that it was nothing to concern himself about. Just a bit of harmless fun. These youngsters!

Louis had agreed with his prime minister. He didn't take his wife's part. It set a dangerous precedent. Anyone could write whatever they liked about Marie Antoinette and the king would do nothing.

So, they did.....♥?♠?

These slanders accumulated throughout the next 20 years, to the extent that, by the time of her trial, many people were prepared to believe that Marie Antoinette had committed incest with her beloved young son. Marie Antoinette, however, in an impassioned and tearful appeal to the watching fishwives during her trial, moved her audience: "Is there even one mother amongst us who can contemplate such a crime? I appeal to every mother here."

Extract 5:

Newly arrived at the Temple Tower prison, Marie Antoinette was surprised and delighted to see a familiar face from her palace. Turgy, a kitchen attendant, had charmed his way into a job in the kitchens.

♥?♠?The first time Turgy entered the dining room, Marie Antoinette recognised him immediately. However, she knew that she could not betray any signs of recognition. It would be fatal for Turgy.

The queen couldn't believe her eyes. Turgy's dark curly locks were no longer covered with a flunkey's wig. She could hardly take her eyes off him.

At the end of the meal, Tison and his wife – the couple who did a little cleaning for the royal family coupled with a lot of spying on the royal family – and the guards and councillors piled hurriedly out of the room carrying the assorted casseroles, coffee pots, breads, cheeses and wines downstairs, to finish what was left over from the meal.

It was the moment Marie Antoinette had been waiting for.

Turgy was finally left by himself for a few moments with the queen. A smile lit her face, there were tears in her eyes. He bowed.

"Monsieur, you should not have come here. It's too dangerous," Marie Antoinette told Turgy, extending her hand to him. He took her hand and touched it delicately to his lips. Like so many others, he was a little in

love with this once absolutely gorgeous queen. Now a little frayed round the edges. But he didn't care.

"And how could I not come, your majesty?" he asked, gazing into her eyes.

"Shh, don't use these words. They're forbidden," Marie Antoinette urged anxiously. Turgu grinned impishly. Marie Antoinette smiled. It was impossible not to smile in response to that roguish grin.

"Someone's coming," the queen said, touching her forefinger to her lips and moving off to join the others. Turgu began stacking the used dishes together. Noisily. Others came into the room and cleared the table in a trice. As Turgu left the room, Marie Antoinette turned back to look at him. There was a hint of a smile about her eyes. No one noticed except Turgu.....♥?♠?

Extract 6:

It's October 1793 and Marie Antoinette doesn't have long to live. There have already been two failed attempts to rescue the queen from the Conciergerie Prison, despite the revolutionaries being sure that this new prison, bristling with guards, would be escape-proof. However, they reckoned without the compassion of the prison warden and some of the guards.

♥?♠?Conciergerie Prison, Paris

Oct 1793

She had just fallen asleep but she heard them coming. She opened her eyes and turned towards the door, her eyes fixed upon it, motionless, holding her breath. There was the tramp of many clogged feet and the yelling of many voices. The door rattled. She watched, mesmerised, as the door opened. Silhouetted against the light in the corridor, were gigantic shapes. They hesitated for an eternity, then monstrous heads lunged forward.

Faces loomed over her. "Get up, bitch!" They pulled back her thin sheet. She quickly pulled her nightdress down to cover her exposed legs, swung them over and rose, shivering. They laughed at her. Pushed her out of the way. Stripped back the bottom sheet. Upended the mattress. Threw it on the floor. Upended her cardboard box. Everything went on the floor. They laughed, bent down, picked up a clean chemise. Poked it with their fingers. Stretched it this way and that. Made fists and put them in the top where her breasts fitted. Laughed.

She stood against a wall. Back, back against the wall. Felt its dark clamminess embrace her thin nightdress. She looked at her shawl. It was on the floor. Someone was treading on it. She crossed her arms on her breast. Tried not to wriggle her toes on the slimy floor.

How many were there? She looked around. Thirty? Forty? Lamps were swinging all over the cell. The bed was upended. Then the table, chairs, screen.

"Keep looking boys. The slut could have hidden things anywhere. Keep looking."

One offered to search her person to see if she was hiding anything there. Raucous laughter from the others.

More tramping from the corridor. Lots of lamps. Officials entered in their black hats and sombre black outfits. The men quietened. Stood to the side. Fouquier-Tinville spoke in a rough, harsh voice: "Anything doing men?"

One of the others said: "No, citizen."

Fouquier-Tinville looked witheringly at her. There were so many lamps in the room that it was easy to see the features of the public prosecutor quite easily. She had heard he came to the prison every night. She had encountered him only once before, when he had interrogated her about the failed escape attempt.

He had a hawk-like, hideous face, which perfectly suited his profession. Small, hooded eyes, long thin nose which was slightly hooked, long black hair reaching his shoulders. Black hat with huge black feathers which swayed hypnotically with every movement and seemed to be permanently attached to his head. It was impossible to imagine him without the hat.

Everyone was afraid of him. So, she had heard. He had sent so many to the guillotine. Hundreds? Thousands? They said he had terrible nightmares. The dead came back to him when he tried to sleep. He slept only for a few hours here and there. He knew his turn for the guillotine would come. That was what he was constantly saying. "My turn will come."

He stared icily at her. "Look citizen," said one of the men. He had noticed her gold watch which she had hung on a nail on the wall, as always. He gave it to Fouquier-Tinville. The public prosecutor bared his teeth in a wolfish attempt at a smile. Looked at Marie Antoinette, his dull eyes lit abruptly by a repulsive glower. "Well, well," he said. The gold watch went into his pocket.

As his wild and restless eyeballs glared at the queen, he noticed her rings sparkling in the light of the lamps. He stepped forward. "Well, well," he repeated, holding out his hands for her rings. She had two diamond rings and her wedding ring.

She flinched a little, and uttered a faint cry, followed by a whispered: "No."

"No, she's saying, men. No," he snarled in a voice devoid of pity. Standing over her menacingly. Pitching a glare encompassing the shadow of the guillotine over her. The others guffawed darkly.

"You're saying 'No' to a public official! You're refusing to hand over your jewellery for the war effort when so many blameless others who have not brought this cruel war on our people have handed in their jewellery for the war effort. And you, you..." Spittle appeared on his lips, showered Marie Antoinette's face. She reached up and wiped it away.

His eyes bulged. "Now citizeness! Now!"

She looked at her diamond rings. Fury and powerlessness rose together in her chest. She took them off and put them on Fouquier-Tinville's hand. It was a surprisingly big paw-like hand. It felt wet, moist. The rings joined the watch in his pocket. She waited. Would he demand her gold wedding ring too? Fouquier-Tinville turned away. "Keep looking men! And check these windows!" Inside the queen a thunderstorm raged.

Two respectable looking young men in the shabby clothes of clerks now came forward as Fouquier-Tinville left the cell.

Marie Antoinette had seen them before. They often came into her cell, at any time of the day, and always rattled the bars on the windows. "Can she escape this way?" they would ask each other, shaking the bars, checking the windows, checking the lock on the door.

If she escaped, their heads were on the line.

The others kept on looking, but they had lost interest. Where else could they look? After a while, they all tramped out, banging the door behind them, the noise reverberating down the stone corridors.

Marie Antoinette sank to the floor, pulling the now rank sheet up to her neck. She was still leaning against the wall. She knew her nightdress would be covered in the black, foul stains which covered the wall, especially at the bottom. She didn't care.

She felt the marrow melt in her bones.

Her mother had given her that watch before she had left Austria, twenty three years before. She could still sense her mother when she touched it. She touched her fingers, unconsciously reaching out to touch her rings. She often played with them, switching them from one hand to the other.

She began to weep.....♥?♠?

You can also see extracts from my book on my Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Marie-Antoin...>
and on my Instagram page <https://picgra.com/tag/marieantoinett...>

Deena Scintilla says

An autographed Goodreads Win. Thank you to author, Margaret Anne MacLeod and to Goodreads.

Altho the book was a thoroughly researched and not well known account of Marie Antoinette's life esp the last few years, it needed better editing and at times did not flow well. I appreciated the inclusion of Marie's, her friend/lover's?, and her daughter's personal letters at the end, but wished the author's interjected comments had been presented as "footnotes" instead, it would have been less distracting.

Brook Allen says

First of all, I really did enjoy reading this book. MacLeod's research is impeccable and shows real effort. Her use of personal letters, private memoirs, and secondary witnesses really brought to life what the REAL French Revolution was--not very pretty. She didn't mind painting a realistic portrayal of Marie Antoinette's monetary wastes during her reign. However, showing the brutality of the revolutionaries makes the reader cheer the Queen on until her tragic end.

MacLeod's book did lack wise editing. The final two-three chapters which dealt with Marie Antoinette's children were very confusing in how she notated her own thoughts vs. the written accounts the reader is focused upon. Footnoting or simply leaving the accounts untouched with author's notes at the end would have been preferable in my opinion.
