

# Marie Antoinette

ADAPTED FROM THE  
MAYNARD GILBERT  
PLAY BY  
GERTRUDE GELBIN

**RESUME**

For four years Marie Antoinette has been wife in name only of Louis August, Dauphin of France. For four years she has been the victim of Court intrigues. Du Barry, the King's favorite, uses Marie's childless ness to undermine her position in Court. The Duke D'Orleans, Du Barry's enemy, plays Marie against the favorite for his own gain, urging the Dauphin to extravagance and escape. When Marie openly insults Du Barry, the King decrees that her marriage shall be annulled and she will be sent back to Austria. In her hour of disgrace, the Duke refuses to help her. She finds a friend in Count Fersen, young Swedish nobleman visiting Court. He tells her he has always loved her, she, in turn, falls in love with him. She is now happy that she will never be Queen. But the King dies before the annulment decree is signed. The Dauphin confesses that he loves her now and wants her for his wife in reality. Marie can only accept her destiny—she must be Queen of France.

necklace had been purchased by the Prince de Rohan who, duped by the Duke's accomplices, thought he was buying it for the Queen. When the whole, wretched affair came to light, Marie Antoinette insisted upon a public trial; so sure was she that her enemies would be confounded and her innocence declared. She was wrong. Almost from the onset of the trial she realized its futility. The Duke threw his weight toward de Rohan's acquittal. Marie Antoinette lost the trial, and with it was destroyed the last vestige of restraint which held back public opinion. The cry of "Justice is done! De Rohan is innocent!" mounted to the roar and thunder of the Marais. Ten thousand men and women, their hats fanned to fever pitch, marched upon Versailles and made the King, the Queen, their children and the Princesse de Lamballe, Marie's still loyal friend, their prisoners. Only the quick action of the Paris Citizens' Committee saved their lives. The Palace of Versailles became the royal prison. Marie Antoinette waited hopelessly for some sign of aid from Austria. None came. None ever would, she knew at last. The fear of assassination was constant.

He had further arranged for Toulon, the guard who had summoned her to him, to permit the family's escape from the Palace. A hired coach would take them to Varennes under his own escort. At Varennes a group of Hussars, loyal to the King, would conduct them over the border. "Everything is planned for the night of June 20th," he concluded. The days dragged endlessly until the twentieth of June. For the hundredth time she conferred with her husband about the details of Fersen's plan. A thousand pitfalls endangered them. But Fate was kind. The night of the twentieth found Marie Antoinette, the King, their children and the Princesse de Lamballe driving madly toward Varennes. At dawn they reached the crossroads and Fersen took his leave; it was unsafe for him to continue further. He stressed his final directions. The Hussars awaited them at Varennes. Within a few hours they would be safely over the border. He wished them Godspeed and farewell. Once more the carriage continued on its way. They were within sight of their destination when Fate marked them for doom. A

Louis shook his head. With a sudden stab of pain Marie Antoinette realized that morning would find her husband on the guillotine. His death left her crushed and bewildered—but a greater trial still awaited her. Guards burst into her cell and took away her son. She begged and pleaded for the child, but her tears and prayers met with stony silence. When he had gone she fell to a chair, frozen, stupefied with grief. Something akin to madness filled her. All she had been through was as nothing. This broke her soul. Soon enough she learned why they had taken the little Dauphin. She was brought to trial. Her son mouthed the phrases they had taught him and which they forced him to speak under torture. His accusation rang throughout the court—echoed through the streets of Paris—dooming his mother on a vicious charge. On his testimony she was condemned. Marie Antoinette was brought back to speak under torture. She was to await her doom. Day after day, she sat there alone, forgotten, her broken mind shutting out the tragedy and final horror of her trial. In all the world only one man remembered her. Count Fersen worked day and night, through channels high and low, to get some word to her. At last, with the help of the Governor he was granted a moment of farewell on the morning of her execution. Just before the first light of dawn he was ushered into a dark corridor leading to the Queen's cell. Marie Antoinette sat on a little bed. She lifted her hand to shield her eyes from the unaccustomed light as the bolts were shot and the door was opened. "Is it time?" she asked dully. There was no answer to her question. Her brows contracted in a frown and she peered through the gloom at Fersen. His heart broke as his eyes, piercing the shadow, took in the whole pitiful picture of her under torture. Her cheeks, loosely knotted white hair. He moved toward her and she looked at him wonderingly. She put out her hand and touched his bowed head. "It is you!" she murmured. Her words came painfully. "You must forgive me. It's always here, always. My sight has grown dim." He tried to answer her but couldn't. "You mustn't think I've forgotten," she mused. "It's only that I feel so little now. So little." Her words were broken into sobs. She drew back into some inner darkness. "He was so small sitting in that big chair," she whispered, "speaking the lies they taught him—"

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### Chapter Three

#### A LAST FAREWELL

Shortly after the coronation which made Louis August King and herself Queen of France, Marie Antoinette sought a rendezvous with the man she loved. She pleaded with Fersen for their right to happiness; she begged him to forget she was Queen and to remember only that she was the woman who loved him—whom he loved. "My mad, reckless, adorable darling!" he cried in anguish. "If I could help you to be Queen, I would give my life to serve you. But your happiness lies in the love of your people. Nothing must stand between you and that—neither your heart nor mine. If I stayed he gestured hopefully. "Marie! I cannot share your destiny except to your own hurt! You must live openly—without fear—without reproach—in sight of all—"

"What are you saying?" she cried in dismay. "I must go away," he answered sadly. For a moment she thought her heart must break and fall at his feet. "Shall I never see you again?" she whispered.

"If you need me, I shall be there," he promised. "I shall always be near you!" she cried passionately.

But in the end she was forced to accept the wisdom of his course. They bade each other a heart-broken farewell.

The memory of his love sustained her during the ten stormy years that followed. Her position in France was doubly dangerous by reason of the constant intrigue against her fermented by the Duke D'Orleans and because her husband's inadequacy to the demands of the time, placed in her hands the reins of State.

As the years rolled on she made her peace with life. If, as Queen of France, she despaired of the fact that Louis was denied the calibre of Kings, as his wife, she learned to regard him with kindly affection. He lavished the goodness and simplicity of his nature upon her and upon their two children.

Perhaps, had her enemies at Court been less powerful she might have won back the love of the French people—the love lost her because they could not forget her wild extravagance as Dauphine nor forgive the escapades which had kept them bent and broken to the wheel of starvation.

This was the hate which the Duke D'Orleans, by letters, poems, street singers and his popularity with the mob, fanned into a consuming flame against the Queen. Eventually he found a way for her complete undoing. Through intrigue he had credited to the Queen the purchase of a diamond necklace worth a King's ransom. The people, starving for bread, rose up in rage against her. Actually the



"Take me in your arms as you did that other dawn."

ly present. One day, as she brooded in her boudoir, a tapping at the secret side panel of the room, startled her into action. With trembling fingers she slid open the small door. A soldier of the Guard saluted her and motioned her to silence. "Will you follow me, Madame," he whispered and thrust something into her hand. "I was to give you this—"

She looked into her palm and her heart missed a beat. There lay the ring she had given Count Fersen ten years before. "Is it—is it he?" she wept. The soldier nodded gravely and pointed below. With a surge of confidence and hope, she swept past him and descended the short flight of stairs. She peered through the darkness, her eyes finding at last the dim figure of a man. "Count Fersen?" she asked faintly.

He raised his face and her heart trembled. It was he! Older, graver and tense—but he had come! He kissed the hand she extended. "You've not forgotten," she whispered. "But you are risking your life! We're prisoners here. We're not permitted friends."

"You have friends who are glad to risk their lives, Madame. I came to beg you to lay a plan of escape before the King."

Hurriedly he unfolded his plan. He had secured false passports made out for a Madame de Korff, her two children, a governess and a lackey. Princesse de Lamballe would be Madame de Korff, the Queen the governess and the King the lackey in order to forestall suspicion. He handed her an envelope. "Here are written the details. Memorize them well and destroy the plans," he cautioned.

blacksmith who had helped them change their horses recognized the King. The morning was still young when the Queen, the King, their children and the Princesse were taken under guard to the Prison de La Force. Immediately upon their arrival at prison the family was separated. The mobs killed Princesse de Lamballe at once. The King was placed in a cell by himself; Marie Antoinette, her son and daughter were taken to another. Daily the roll of drums, the howls of the populace, the groan of the guillotine and the dull thud of heads falling in its grisly basket, celebrated the revolution. In Paris, the Commune met to decide the fate of the royal prisoners. "Death!" shouted Robespierre. "Death!" demanded Marat. "Life imprisonment!" pleaded La Rue. An ominous silence awaited the fourth and deciding vote. "Citizen Orleans, your vote!" commanded the President. The Duke D'Orleans rose slowly from his seat, conscious that all eyes were turned in his direction. The crowd waited in horrified silence. Would he condemn his kinsman? Something in his wonted suavity forsook him. He braced himself to speak. "Death!" he shouted. That night the guards announced that the King would dine with his family. The little Dauphin and his sister were overjoyed at seeing their father again. The evening passed happily with kindness and devotion between Marie and her husband. The Dauphin broke the arm of his toy soldier and asked his father to mend it for him. Louis promised to do so and send it back in the morning. "Will you bring it back?" asked the child.

Count Fersen worked day and night, through channels high and low, to get some word to her. At last, with the help of the Governor he was granted a moment of farewell on the morning of her execution. Just before the first light of dawn he was ushered into a dark corridor leading to the Queen's cell. Marie Antoinette sat on a little bed. She lifted her hand to shield her eyes from the unaccustomed light as the bolts were shot and the door was opened. "Is it time?" she asked dully. There was no answer to her question. Her brows contracted in a frown and she peered through the gloom at Fersen. His heart broke as his eyes, piercing the shadow, took in the whole pitiful picture of her under torture. Her cheeks, loosely knotted white hair. He moved toward her and she looked at him wonderingly. She put out her hand and touched his bowed head. "It is you!" she murmured. Her words came painfully. "You must forgive me. It's always here, always. My sight has grown dim." He tried to answer her but couldn't. "You mustn't think I've forgotten," she mused. "It's only that I feel so little now. So little." Her words were broken into sobs. She drew back into some inner darkness. "He was so small sitting in that big chair," she whispered, "speaking the lies they taught him—"

"He will know when he's older," Fersen comforted. She looked into his drawn, anguished face. "There are tears in your eyes," she exclaimed. "I have no tears." She sighed. "I shall be a little afraid, perhaps, when I see—"

"It's quick," she said. "I turned away, unable to bear more. She placed her hand upon him. "Take me in your arms as you did that other dawn," she whispered. "When it's over," she murmured, "don't grieve. Say to yourself—she is asleep—the curtains are drawn and now she lies at rest."

The roll of muffled drums sounded from afar. The time had come. As day dawned, the wretched knacker's cart rumbled over the streets to the steady beat of the drum and the stifled murmur of the awed mob. Her hands tied behind her, her face expressionless, her eyes closed, Marie Antoinette rode to her doom. She opened her eyes for a last glimpse of Paris, city of her triumphs, her follies, her tragedy. She looked toward the Tuilleries where her children had played. The steady roll of the drums beat in upon her consciousness. With tired steps, she mounted the guillotine. The pale October sun shone through the sky. For a moment the knife glittered in its light. Then it crashed downward and took Marie Antoinette to her rest. THE END.

## WHO KNOWS?

1. How many countries have had wars or revolts in the last twenty years?
2. What is the cost of the raw cotton in a \$2.00 shirt?
3. How old is Secretary Hull?
4. Who is the "White House" spokesman?
5. Does the wage-hour law, which goes into effect October 24, affect agricultural workers?
6. Did the British and French parliaments approve the Munich agreement?
7. Has the American Labor Party announced candidates in New York?
8. Have the taxable profits of corporations declined?
9. How does the price of wheat compare with the price in the spring of 1937?
10. What are the resources of the Chase National Bank, of New York?

### THE ANSWERS

1. Forty-five.
2. About forty cents.
3. 67 years.
4. A term sometimes employed by Presidents to give their views anonymously.
5. No.
6. Yes. British vote 386 to 144; French, 525 to 75.
7. It has nominated the Democratic candidates for Governor, U. S. Senator and Congressman-at-Large.
8. Latest figures, for 1938, are the highest since 1925.
9. Now about 90 cents; then, about

## Business Guides

By C. E. Johnston  
(Director, Business Training Schools, International Correspondence Schools)

WHEN popular idea of advertising is that it consists chiefly in the writing of advertisements. More important than the preparation of copy, however, is the ability to understand the prospective customer's wants so as to know how the most effective sales appeal may be made.

All of us are engaged in some form of selling every day. Perhaps you need do nothing more than sell yourself. When all is said and done, successful selling depends largely upon each man's individual ability to adapt himself to the peculiar circumstances of each situation and to handle with skill the numerous details that enter into the sale. This requires the use of observation, diplomacy, persistence, patience and a full knowledge of the commodity one is selling. Of course, there can be no hard and fast rules for conducting interviews with an almost endless variety of human beings. The salesman, like the military general, must plan his campaign with all the resourcefulness at his command.

Enthusiasm is the spark in the salesman's personality. It is the glow of sincerity that radiates naturally from the face of the salesman who believes in himself and his ability to sell; who believes in the merits of his product and the company back of it; and who believes in the probability of selling as one that is worthy of his best efforts.

## Safety First

Mrs. Jones—I had the most terrible scare last night. I heard a noise in the middle of the night and turned on the light. There sticking out from beneath the bed was a pair of man's legs.

Mrs. Bones—Was it a burglar?

Mrs. Jones—Oh, no. It was my husband. He heard the noise first.

## DYNAMITES BANK

San Jose, Calif.—Because he couldn't stop thinking about a foreclosure

suit on his property four years ago, a 30-year-old ranch worker has confessed dynamiting a two-story bank building in a blast that damaged other structures for four blocks.

## MAGNIFIES 100,000 TIMES

Berlin.—German scientists report the construction of a microscope that uses electrons instead of light rays and magnifies 100,000 times. The inventors hope that it will reveal the viruses, cause of human disease, which have so far defied detection by microscopes.

## Good Second-hand Peanut Bags For Sale

These bags are of the same quality that proved so satisfactory to the many farmers who used them last year. They are not perfect, but we consider them better and more uniform in size than most of the so-called "re-built" bags. Stop by and look them over... and get our prices. It may result in a considerable saving to you.

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PHONE 34 EDENTON, N. C.

## Cold Weather Fails To Check Bug Pests

"Don't let cold weather lull you into a false sense of security against household insects," warns J. O. Rowell, extension specialist at State College.

Before modern heating came into general use, he said, houses would get cold enough in winter to check the damage of clothes moths, carpet beetles, cockroaches, silverfish, and other such pests.

But now many homes are so well heated in winter, and are so well constructed that insects keep up their activities the year round. Hence, clothes in storage must be protected in winter as well as in summer.

Housewives can reduce insect damage to clothes by brushing, sunning, and airing frequently during the winter. It is also a good plan to clean all cracks and corners of closets and storage rooms.

Wool sweaters and other garments that are even slightly soiled are particularly appetizing to moths. Clothes that are going to be left hanging up very long at a time should be cleaned and packed in moth-proof containers. Naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene flakes give added protection to clothes in storage.

Cleanliness is a good protection not only against clothes moths and carpet beetles, Rowell continued, but also against kitchen insects.

The small, grayish, scale-covered insects known as silverfish thrive in damp warm basements, but often do much damage in other parts of the house, feeding upon paper, book-bindings, starchy or sweet food, and sometimes on fabrics, especially rayon. They can be controlled with a poison bait made of oatmeal, white arsenic, sugar, salt, and enough water to moisten.

## PLANTING TREES

American farmers have planted a larger area to forests than any other group, according to the U. S. Forest Service. An area nearly twice as large as Delaware or 3,680 square miles has been planted successfully to trees by all agencies since 1924.

## HIGH MILK FLOW

Milk production for this time of the year is the largest on record but is declining seasonally, says John A. Arey, State College extension dairyman. Underlying factors are the abundant feed supplies at low prices when compared with butterfat prices.

HOUSEHOLD DUTIES AND SHOPPING DO A LOT TO GET MY NERVES UPSET!

I PAUSE EVERY LITTLE WHILE TO LET UP—LIGHT UP A CAMEL!

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