THE REVOLUTIONISTS

dramaturgy packet

Devon Hayakawa
devonhayakawa@gmail.com
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Welcome to The Revolution

Hello campers! Welcome to the dramaturgy packet for Farmers Alley Theatre's production of *The Revolutionists*!

What is dramaturgy?

Dramaturgy wears many hats, but at its core, dramaturgy is the **exploration and understanding of the world of the play** based on both the play itself and the way in which it engages with the world we live in.

Use this website like a playground. Explore it to your heart's desire! Read about the historical context of the play! Look into the lives of these women! See inspiration directly from the playwright herself! If you're looking for answers, you'll find them here!

And in case there's something you can't find in the pages of this website, never fear - just use the Contact page, and I'll be sure to add answers to the website as quickly as I can for you!

If you prefer your tidbits of wisdom with a little more flair, check out the website here.

Don't know where to start? Let's dive into some historical context!

The History – The French Revolution

Notes & Videos

The information on this page does not cover every single event of the decade known as the French Revolution. Some key events, notable names, and moments that directly impact the play are featured on this page (and the next).

However, for those that wish to know as much as humanly possible, I'd recommend starting with these videos that sum up the French Revolution in the most engaging way:

The French Revolution: Crash Course European History #21

The French Revolution – Oversimplified (Part 1)

The French Revolution: Crash Course World History #29

The Basics

The French Revolution was a period of time in which French citizens revolted against the monarchy, the feudal system, and the overall political landscape of the country. The upset spanned approximately a decade, starting with the Estates General of 1789, and ending with the formation of the French Consulate in 1799.

France's involvement in the American Revolution was costly, and combined with wild population growth, economic depression, regressive taxes, and extravagant spending by King Louis XVI – France was on the brink of bankruptcy.

Social unrest and political dissent thrived as France's citizens received better education, and gained more places for active discussions and debates. Many were unhappy with the centuries old Ancien Régime – the Old Regime, which was a societal structure centered around kings and the nobility. Under this structure, the nobles and the clergy didn't pay taxes – only the commoners.

The Estates-General & The Tennis Court Oath

In May of 1789, Louis XVI, in response to the financial crisis France was undergoing, called a meeting of the Estates-General – which was the closest thing France had to a national parliament.

Every French citizen belonged to one of the three Estates:

> The First Estate included members of the Roman Catholic clergy, approximately 100,000 people.
>
> The Second Estate included France's nobility, approximately 400,000 people.
>
> The Third Estate included the commoners, approximately 97% of France's total population.

During the Estates-General, the representatives of each group would convene separately to discuss and vote on issues. The problem this created, was that despite representing 97% of the population, the Third Estate could be easily outvoted by the First and Second Estates, whose interests were often aligned.

The people of France began to take action, gaining support for equal representation and the abolishment of the "noble veto." By the time the Estates-General actually met in 1789, hostility arose amongst the three groups. The Third Estate representatives met alone, and changed their title to the National Assembly on June 17th, 1789.

They met at the king's indoor tennis court a few days later, and took the Tennis Court Oath – a vow not to leave until constitutional reform had been achieved.

Within a week, most of the clerical deputies and nearly fifty nobles had joined them, and by the end of June, Louis XVI combined the First, Second, and Third Estates into one new assembly.

The Storming of the Bastille

On July 11th, 1789, King Louis XVI dismissed and banished his finance minister, Jacques Necker, and began restructuring the ministry. Necker had been sympathetic to the Third Estate, and frequently represented the voice of the people.

When word of Necker's dismissal reached the greater population the next day, crowds of thousands rallied throughout Paris to protest the decision. Calvaries were called in, but it only sparked further unrest in the city. The people began to plunder any places where weapons, food, and supplies were rumored to be stored.

On the morning of July 13th, a "bourgeois militia" of 48,000 men was created in order to restore the peace. Lafayette led this group, which was officially named the National Guard. This is where the tri-color of blue, white, and red originated from.

July 14th, 1789. That morning, Parisians gathered outside of the Bastille – a medieval fortress acting as a prison for a total of seven prisoners. The great stone building represented royal tyranny, to the members of the Third Estate – maintaining the Bastille was costly, and to maintain it while only seven prisoners occupied cells was a waste of time, labor, and money. The people gathered outside of the Bastille in hopes of gaining the extra gunpowder that was stored inside.

Negotiations began, and when the negotiations kept cycling back to going nowhere, the people took action.

Around 1:30 PM, the crowd barged in to an undefended outer courtyard, leading to a group breaking the chains of the drawbridge, and letting the mass of people in.

What was once a crowd quickly became a mob, the protest growing more and more violent by the second. By the time the fighting and chaos finally ceased, ninety-eight members of the crowd and one defender of the Bastille had died.

The king, who only heard about the events the following morning asked the Duke of La Rochefoucauld, "Is it a revolt?"

The Duke replied, "No sire, it's not a revolt; it's a revolution."

The Abolition of Feudal Rights & The Declaration of the Rights of Man

In August of 1789, a large group of aristocrats surrendered their feudal rights as nobility, which led to the National Assembly making formal decrees declaring that feudal society (i.e. the structure in which the clergy and the nobility were allowed more rights in regards to land ownership, tithes, and taxation privileges; also known as the Ancien Régime), had officially been abolished.

That same month, the National Assembly passed the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen – which emphasized the right to liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression. In part, it read, "Men are born and remain free and equal in rights." This sentiment was inherently applicable to all – not added to the end, and only applicable to non-slaves like the equivalent documents in the United States.

Perhaps most importantly, the Declaration of the Rights of Man stated that the power of the monarch did not stem from some divine figure, some religious entity – it came directly from the people, the citizens of France.

The Women's March

In October of 1789, what started as a rumor that Marie Antoinette was hoarding grain at Versailles, led to a large group of Parisian market women marching to Versailles to bring the Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, and the rest of the royal family back to Paris so the people could monitor their actions.

Although no members of the royal family were hurt, some in their closest circle were violated, murdered, and mutilated. Many a body part was displayed up on pikes. This unexpected violence caused many aristocrats to flee the country.

Constitutional Monarchy & Civil Constitution of the Clergy

This march led to the creation of a constitution, therefore making France's monarchy a constitutional one. The people of France believed that a king was necessary for a functioning state, but they wanted a system in place that allowed them the agency to keep the king in check.

Then, in 1790, the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was adopted, which took power away from the churches, and mandated the election of the priests by the parishioners themselves.

King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette attempted to flee mid-1791, but were caught at Varennes.

War with Austria & Prussia

Throughout 1791 and 1792, war broke out between revolutionary France, Austria, and Prussia – Austria and Prussia wanted to return to power solely to the monarch, as it benefitted them through the power of Marie Antoinette (former Archduchess of Austria, but current Queen of France).

A radical group known as the Jacobins called for the formation of a republic. A protest they held at the Champ de Mars caused troops of the National Assembly (formerly the Third Estate) to fire on the crowd, killing fifty people. This event meant that the National Assembly, which had thus far been the voice of the people and of the revolution, had killed people whilst trying to stifle the revolution.

One can see how this caused some controversy.

The Duke of Brunswick, the commanding general of the Austo-Prussian army, threatened to destroy Paris if any harm came to King Louis XVI. As a response, the Girondin faction of the Jacobins took matters into their own hands, leading the overthrow of King Louis XVI, and establishing the French First Republic.

The August Insurrection

France was in the midst of potential danger from the Austro-Prussian army, and King Louis XVI was not handling the added pressure of his life being on the line very well.

On August 10th, 1792, the National Guard of the Paris Commune as well as some others stormed the Tuileries Palace in Paris, where King Louis XVI resided, in protest of radical measures that Louis had vetoed. Swiss Guards defended this palace while Louis and the royals took shelter. Hundreds of Swiss Guards were slaughtered, as well as over 400 revolutionaries storming the palace.

King Louis XVI would later be blamed and held accountable for the bloodshed of this day.

The September Massacres

In September of 1792, the threat of Paris coming under attack from the Austro-Prussian army was too much for citizens to handle. They also worried that imprisoned politicians from the recent overthrow of the monarchy were planning their own counterrevolutionary plot.

On September 1st, a meeting was scheduled for the following day for anyone volunteering their service or their weapons and supplies, to be held at the Champs de Mars.

On September 2nd, a Jacobin political leader by the name of Georges Danton gave a speech to those that had gathered to volunteer, stating: "We ask that anyone refusing to give personal service or to furnish arms shall be punished with death."

Less than twenty-four hours later, over 1,000 prisoners had been slain.

Two women of the revolution, Madame Roland and Charlotte Corday, held two different men responsible for these deaths in their own way. Madame Roland shamed Georges Danton in her writing. Charlotte Corday assassinated Jean-Paul Marat, another Jacobin radical.

Both women were killed by the guillotine for their crimes.

The Rise of the Jacobins

The Society of the Friends of the Constitution, renamed the Society of the Jacobins, Friends of Freedom and Equality, was a political club that held incredible amounts of influence throughout the French Revolution. The club grew from a handful of members during the Estates-General meeting of 1789 to approximately half a million members by 1794. The Jacobins included multiple factions, including The Mountain (of which, Maximilien Robespierre and Jean-Paul Marat were members), and the Girondins (of which, assassin Charlotte Corday was a member).

The Girondin faction was powerful during the aforementioned war time, but in 1793, members of The Mountain faction, led by Maximilien Robespierre, succeeded in pushing the Girondin faction out of political power. Twenty-one prominent Girondins were sent to the guillotine that October.

Once the Girondins were out of the way, The Mountain controlled the French government until mid-1794.

This period of Jacobin power led by The Mountain faction was also known as the Reign of Terror.

The History – The Reign of Terror

Notes & Videos

The information on this page does not cover every single event within the Reign of Terror. Some key events, notable names, and moments that directly impact the play are featured on this page.

However, for those that wish to know as much as humanly possible, I'd recommend starting with these videos that sum up the Reign of Terror in the most engaging way:

Why 17,000 Were Executed During the Reign of Terror

The Trial & Execution of Louis XVI

Shortly before the September Massacres of 1792, King Louis XVI was arrested and imprisoned at an ancient fortress in Paris for a multitude of crimes that "established his tyranny." The September Massacres followed, and then on September 21st, 1792, the National Assembly abolished the monarchy. Louis was stripped of all titles and honors.

His arrest and subsequent trial was controversial in some ways – the Girondin faction of the Jacobins wished to keep him imprisoned for his crimes. The Mountain demanded he pay with his life.

Thirty-three charges were brought against Citizen Louis Capet in his December trial. The charges varied from his attempted escape to Varennes, supporting or causing several revolts, electing questionable officials, bribing, and lastly, "causing the blood of Frenchmen to flow."

Despite decent arguments from Louis and his defense, the vote was overwhelmingly that he should face the guillotine. This charge was led by Mountain member Robespierre, who voted first and said, "The sentiment that led me to call for the abolition of the death penalty is the same that today forces me to demand that it be applied to the tyrant of my country."

Citizen Louis Capet was guillotined on January 21st, 1793 in the Place de la Révolution.

The Committee of Public Safety

The Committee of Public Safety was created by the National Convention in April of 1793, after the abolition of the monarchy and the death of the last king, Louis XVI. The Committee's original purpose was to protect the new republic from foreign and domestic enemies. During this time, they were given supervisory and administrative powers over the armed forces, judiciary and legislature, as well as the executive bodies and ministers of the National Convention.

The Committee started with an abundance of power, and that power only grew over time. It shifted from a group that merely protected, to a dictatorial organization led by none other than Maximilien Robespierre. They accused many of treason, and were one of the main causes of the era known as the Reign of Terror.

Terror

Maximilien Robespierre's words reflect on this era extraordinarily well:

"If the basis of popular government in peacetime is virtue, the basis of popular government during a revolution is both virtue and terror; virtue, without which terror is baneful; terror, without which virtue is powerless. Terror is nothing more than speedy, severe and inflexible justice; it is thus an emanation of virtue; it is less a principle in itself, than a consequence of the general principle of democracy, applied to the most pressing needs of the [homeland]."

This era took a lot of inspiration from the Enlightenment period. Robespierre believed that in order to have a government that supported the Enlightenment ideal of "general will" – the will of the people, not just the will of a few factions – the people who opposed this ideal would need to be expelled.

Major Events

On March 10th 1793, the National Convention created the Revolutionary Tribunal, also known as the Popular Tribunal. This was a court that actively supported the Reign of Terror.

On April 6th, 1793, the National Convention established the aforementioned Committee of Public Safety.

On April 13th, 1793, Girondins brought an accusation against Mountain member Jean-Paul Marat. The case collapsed, but set up an important precedent that members of the National Convention could be tried by the Tribunal. This led to the Girondin leaders being tried and executed in October of 1793.

On June 2nd, 1793, Parisian sans-culottes (a lower class political organization) demand changes from the National Convention regarding bread prices, political purges, and voting limitations that would benefit the san-culottes alone. This action convinced the Convention to arrest twenty-nine Girondist leaders.

On July 13th, 1793, Jean-Paul Marat was assassinated by Girondist Charlotte Corday. This unintentionally boosted Jacobin influence.

On July 27th 1793, Maximilien Robespierre joined the Committee of Public Safety, spurring its rise of power. He became president of the group not long after.

On September 5th, 1793, the National Convention declared that "terror is the order of the day." This allowed the creation of revolutionary armies whose sole purpose was to force citizens to follow Maximilian rule.

On October 10th, 1793, the National Convention announced that "the provisional government shall be revolutionary until peace." This allowed the Committee for Public Safety and Robespierre to continue acting until "peace" was achieved in France.

On October 16th, 1793, Marie Antoinette, the wife of former King Louis XVI, was executed at the guillotine.

On October 24th, 1793, the French Republican Calendar was enacted. Those dates will be listed in parenthesis for future major events below.

On December 4th, 1793 (14th of Frimaire), the National Convention passed the Law of Frimaire. This centralized all power to the Committee for Public Safety.

On February 4th, 1794 (16th of Pluviôse), the National Convention decreed the abolition of slavery in France and all French colonies.

On March 24th, 1794, the radical group known as the Hébertists saw their major leaders executed by guillotine. This group called for an intensification of the Terror and threatened insurrection.

On April 5th, 1794, the Dantonists, led by Georges Danton of the September Massacres, saw their major leaders executed by the guillotine. This group called for moderation and clemency.

On July 28th, 1794, Maximilien Robespierre was brought to the guillotine after a slew of actions that turned the rest of the Committee and the Convention against him. It is unclear how, but he managed to shatter his jaw the night before, and was brought to the guillotine with a bandage holding it in place. The bandage was removed as his neck was cleared for the blade. The screams he elicited continued until the blade fell.

Casualties

During the Reign of Terror, approximately 16,600 official death sentences had been followed through with in France, 2,639 of which were in Paris alone. An additional 10,000 died in prison without trial.

The History – The Haitian Revolution

Notes & Videos

While this play mainly focuses on aspects of the French Revolution, no historical event lives in a vacuum. Many other events in history can be intrinsically linked back to the French Revolution, one of which was the Haitian Revolution, also known as the Saint-Domingue Revolution.

The Haitian Revolution was a successful insurrection by self-liberated slaves against French colonial rule in the 1790s. This revolution began in 1791, two years before the plot of The Revolutionists, but it did not end until 1804, five years after the conclusion of the French Revolution.

Because the Haitian Revolution is not the central focus of the play, I will only be adding videos below for those who wish to have as much context as possible. If you have any additional questions regarding this revolution, please let me know using the Contact Page!

Haitian Revolutions: Crash Course World History #30

The First and Last King of Haiti – Marlene Daut

Égalité for All: Toussaint Louverture & The Haitian Revolution

The History – Overall Timeline

1789

May 5th - Estates General
June 4th - Marie Antoinette & King Louis XVI's Son Passes Away
June 17th - Creation of National Assembly
June 20th - Tennis Court Oath
July 11th - Dismissal of Jacques Necker
July 14th - Storming the Bastille
August 4th - Abolition of Feudal System
August 26th - Declaration of the Rights of Man Published
October 5th - Women's March

1790

January – Jacobins Officially Established
July 12th - Creation of Civil Constitution of the Clergy

1791

Ongoing - War with Austria & Prussia
July 17th - Champ de Mars Massacre
September 14th - Declaration of Rights of Woman and Female Citizen Published

1792

July 25th - The Brunswick Manifesto
August 10th - August 10th Insurrection at Tuileries
August 13th - King Louis XVI Arrested
September 2nd - September Massacres
September 21st – Abolition of Monarchy by National Assembly
December 2nd - Trial of Louis XVI Begins

1793

January 21st – Louis XVI Executed by Guillotine
March 10th - National Convention Created Revolutionary Tribunal
April 6th - Creation of Committee for Public Safety
April 13th - Accusation Against Jean-Paul Marat Brought to the Revolutionary Tribunal
June 2nd – Twenty-Nine Girondist Leaders Arrested by National Convention
July 13th - Jean-Paul Marat Assassinated by Charlotte Corday
July 17th - Charlotte Corday Executed by Guillotine

July 27th - Maximilien Robespierre Joins Committee of Public Safety
September 5th - National Convention Declares “Terror is the Order of the Day”
October 10th - Provisional Government Extended Indefinitely
October 16th - Marie Antoinette Executed by Guillotine
November 3rd - Olympe de Gouge Executed by Guillotine
December 4th - Law of Frimaire Passed

1794

February 4th - Abolition of Slavery in France & French Colonies
March 24th - Hébertist Leaders Executed by Guillotine
April 5th - Dantonist Leaders Executed by Guillotine
July 28th - Maximilien Robespierre Executed by Guillotine

The Women – Olympe de Gouges

The Beginning

Olympe de Gouges was a French playwright and political activist whose most famous works were created during the French Revolution.

Olympe was born as Marie Gouze on May 7th, 1748 in southwestern France. She received a bourgeois education thanks to her family's fortune, and became literate at a young age.

Marie was married at the age of seventeen to a man named Louis Yves Aubry against her will. A later semi-autobiographical novel of hers entitled *Mémoires* proved her disdain for this marriage, the young bride of the novel saying, "I was married to a man I did not love and who was neither rich nor well-born. I was sacrificed for no reason that could make up for the repugnance I felt for this man."

Marie had a son with named Pierre with Aubry, and a few months after, her husband was killed by a flood. Marie changed her name to Olympe de Gouges, swore off marriage, calling it "the tomb of trust and love," and moved to Paris.

The Middle

At the age of twenty, Olympe de Gouges moved to Paris. She lived with her sister and her son, though her income was provided for by a wealthy businessman named Jacques Biétrix de Rozières who she had begun a relationship with.

She acclimated quickly to fashionable Parisian society, socializing at salons with other dramatists such as Madame de Montesson, Comtesse de Beauharnais, La Harpe, Mercier, and Chamfort; as well as early-career politicians such as Brissot and Condorcet.

Her career picked up in the 1780s with the publication of her first novel in 1784, and a slew of public letters, plays and pamphlets shortly after. Her public letters helped establish the feminine term for citizen, *citoyenne*, as an official replacement for Madame and Mademoiselle in more political spaces.

Throughout the 1780s, she passionately penned works focusing on the plight of slaves in the French colonies. For Gouges there was a direct connection between the autocratic monarchy in France and the institution of slavery. The public took notice of her 1785 play *l'Esclavage des Noirs*, which was staged at the famous Comédie-Française, and earned her many threats. The slave trade lobby actively campaigned against this production, and paid hecklers that eventually sabotaged the show enough to force it to close only three performances into the run. This would not be the last of *l'Esclavage des Noirs*.

Olympe de Gouges' most notable political piece was her 1791 pamphlet entitled *Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne*, or, Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen. This pamphlet was created as a direct response to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (which you can read more about on The French Revolution page), which had been adopted two years earlier by the National Assembly. This piece demanded equal rights for women, stating that women, like their male counterparts, have natural, inalienable, and sacred rights. She fought for equality in property ownership, taxation and finances, she fought for the right for a woman to publicly name a man as the father of her children in order to hold men, regardless of their marriage status, accountable as providers for their children. She urged readers to consider these inequalities, and to think of how to resolve these injustices for future generations.

In the French colony of Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti), free people of color and African slaves revolted in response to the ideals expressed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. When Gouges published her earlier play *l'Esclavage des Noirs* in print, the mayor of Paris accused her of inspiring the revolts. When her play was finally staged again in 1792, a riot erupted in Paris.

When Louis XVI was put on trial to be executed, Olympe wrote to the National Assembly offering to defend him, stating she believed he was guilty as a king, but innocent as a man, and that he should be exiled rather than executed. He was executed, her writings ignored.

Olympe de Gouges was associated with the Girondins, one of the factions of the Jacobins. The other primary faction of the Jacobins, the members of The Mountain, gained political power throughout the early 1790s, and began imprisoning prominent Girondins, who were later sent to the guillotine in October of 1793.

The End

She was eventually arrested for writing a poster entitled *Les trois urnes, ou le salut de la Patrie, par un voyageur aérien*, or "The Three Urns, or the Salvation of the Fatherland, by an Aerial Traveller." In this poster, she proposed a vote for one of three choices for a potential government: a unitary republic, a federalist government, or a constitutional monarchy. She was arrested, as the law of the revolution made it a capital offense for anyone to publish works that encouraged reestablishing a monarchy.

She spent three months in jail without an attorney, as she'd been denied her legal right to one on the grounds that she could "represent herself" based on her many writings. Through her friends, she published two final texts: *Olympe de Gouges au tribunal révolutionnaire*, or, "Olympe de Gouges at the Revolutionary tribunal", and her last work, *Une patriote persécutée*, or, "A female patriot persecuted", in which she condemned the Reign of Terror.

On November 3rd, 1793, Olympe de Gouges was executed by guillotine for her seditious behavior and for attempting to reinstate the monarchy.

The Women – Charlotte Corday

The Beginning

Charlotte Corday was a figure in the French Revolution best known for assassinating Jacobin leader Jean-Paul Marat.

Marie-Anne Charlotte de Corday d'Armont was born on July 27th, 1768 in Normandy, France. After the death of her mother and older sister, her grief-stricken father sent Charlotte and her younger sister to a convent in Caen. It was here that Charlotte first encountered the works of Plutarch, Rousseau, and Voltaire.

The Middle

As the French Revolution moved from political revolution to radicalized terror, Charlotte found herself sympathizing with the Jacobin faction known as the Girondins. Many Girondist groups visited Caen, and she was exposed to numerous speeches and Girondin leaders over the years. She regarded them as a movement that would ultimately save France.

The September Massacres of 1792 and the deaths of Girondin leaders by the guillotine angered her further, which eventually led to the moment she is most known for in history – the assassination of Jean-Paul Marat.

The End

Corday believed that Marat's death would prevent the possibility of a civil war in France, as his radicalized beliefs as a member of the Jacobin faction known as The Mountain had led to only bloodshed and violence thus far.

On July 9th, 1793, Charlotte Corday traveled to Paris and took a room at the Hôtel de Providence. She bought a kitchen knife, and over the course of the next few days, she wrote *Adresse aux Français amis des lois et de la paix*, or "Address to the French, the friends of Law and Peace." This piece explained her motives for the upcoming assassination.

On July 13th, 1793, Charlotte Corday visited Marat's own home with news of a planned Girondist uprising in Caen. Due to a skin condition, Marat conducted business from the comfort of his own bathtub. He listened to Charlotte read names of Girondins involved in the uprising, and as he wrote them down, she plunged the knife directly into his chest. His fiancée rushed into the room, along with another man who seized Corday. Corday made no attempt to escape.

Throughout her trial, the most recurring question was whether she was involved in a larger Girondist plot. She truthfully insisted that this was an act entirely of her own doing, which many

of the officials examining her did not believe, as they thought another man had to be behind her schemes.

She requested to be painted before her execution, which was fulfilled by a National Guard officer named Jean-Jacques Hauer. It has been said that Hauer admired her, and took a keen interest in her fate, but was required to portray Charlotte as a vain aristocrat in his portrait. His depiction of her showed Corday as having very light hair – implying that she had taken the time to powder her hair before killing Marat. Her true hair color was darker than this.

On July 17th, 1793, twenty-four year old Charlotte Corday was executed by guillotine for being a condemned traitor who had assassinated a representative of the people.

An angry man named Legros slapped her cheek after her head had fallen off into the basket, and Jacobin leaders had her body autopsied immediately after her death to check for her virginity, convinced that a man sharing her bed was in on the assassination plans.

There was no man, and Charlotte was found to be a virgin. She “alone conceived the plan and executed it.”

The Women – Marie Antoinette

Notes & Videos

The information on this page does not cover every single life event of Marie Antoinette – she lived a life filled to the brim with important people, places, and happenings. Some of the most notable moments in her life can be found below.

However, for those that wish to know as much as humanly possible, I'd recommend starting with these videos that sum up Marie's life in the most engaging way:

Marie Antoinette Explained in 13 Minutes

Marie Antoinette: The Last Queen of France Before the French Revolution

The Beginning

Marie Antoinette, archduchess of Austria, was the last queen of France before the French Revolution.

Maria Antonia Josepha Johanna was born on November 2nd, 1755 at Hofburg Palace in Vienna, Austria. She was the 15th child of Empress Maria Theresa and Holy Roman Emperor, Francis I.

She excelled in music and dancing, but her writing skills were considered to be lacking. She struggled writing in her own language at the age of ten, let alone any others. A tutor who was tasked with preparing Marie for marriage to Louis-Auguste, the heir apparent of the French throne, stated that "her character, her heart, are excellent." He found her "more intelligent than has been generally supposed," but since "she is rather lazy and extremely frivolous, she is hard to teach."

She officially became dauphine of France at the age of fourteen when she married Louis-Auguste, and four years later, he became Louis XVI and ascended the throne. Marie adopted the French version of her name, Marie Antoinette, upon her arrival in France.

The Middle

As queen, Marie Antoinette had a penchant for the expensive. She spent heavily on luxury goods – fashionable dresses and accessories, and even spent money gambling despite the grave financial crisis France was currently going through. Many French citizens began blaming Marie for the economic situation of the country, and her spending habits even sparked some civil unrest.

Her favor with the people increased when she gave birth to her first child. During her first pregnancy, Marie Antoinette also began making some changes within the court – away from the heavy makeup and wide hoop skirts, and more in the direction of a simplistic yet feminine look. Her changes in this regard were frequently met with disapproval from others, but Marie trudged on.

Marie Antoinette was undoubtedly a large part in the success of the American Revolution, which was notoriously one of her earlier political triumphs. She secured Austrian and Russian support for France, which resulted in the establishment of the First League of Armed Neutrality, stopping many of Britain's attacks.

In 1781, she gave birth to her second child, Louis Joseph Xavier François, Dauphin of France.

Throughout the 1780s, Marie was accused of being sexually deviant by the public. Pamphlets circled the country, claiming that Marie had sexual relations with numerous other royals. These pamphlets started as an attack on the royal court in general, but then escalated to focus primarily on Marie Antoinette herself. The rumors, stories, and pamphlets highlighted the people's disdain for her association with Austria (her homeland), and many suggested that she learned "lesbianism" from her home country, as it was considered to be a "German vice."

In 1785, the "Affair of the Diamond Necklace" damaged Marie's reputation in a way it would never recover from. This entire affair is better explained in video, so please enjoy the following:

The Affair of the Diamond Necklace – Marie Antoinette – Extra History

Stealing The World's Most Expensive Necklace – Puppet History

Marie's reputation declining for multiple reasons (several expensive wars, family costs paid for by the state, and nobility unwilling to aid in the paying of taxes), she still found herself to be the scapegoat for France's financial troubles. She even earned the nickname "Madame Déficit" from the citizens in 1787. Marie tried to repair her reputation by portraying herself as a kind and caring mother, commissioning paintings of her and her children. While this may have helped a little, it was not enough to keep slander from multiple sources from spreading like wildfire.

As the French Revolution approached, Marie's first born son was suffering from tuberculosis. Her son passed away on June 4th, 1789, amidst the creation of the National Assembly post-Estates-General. The French people did not acknowledge the death, and instead blew directly past it in support of the growing revolution.

Though unpopular with the general public, Marie Antoinette did prove to be a better decision-maker than her husband King Louis XVI in the early days of the French Revolution. In the fall of 1789, she successfully swayed her husband to resist the National Assembly's attempts to

abolish feudalism. While decisive in nature, this caused her to become the main target of many revolutionaries.

Many associate Marie Antoinette with the phrase, “Let them eat cake!” but she did not actually say this. Writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau quoted in one of his works that a “great princess” had told peasants who had no bread, *Qu'ils mangent de la brioche!* Many historians believe that Marie was not the aforementioned princess, but this quote was widely attributed to her due to her penchant for expensive luxury goods, brioche and cakes being some of those said goods.

The royal family was swept up in the Women’s March in October of 1789, and moved from Versailles to Paris amidst a horde of citizens. In Paris, they were virtually held captive by the people, and due to this, the royal couple planned an escape to Varennes the following summer. They were quickly caught by revolutionaries, and were brought back to Paris.

In an attempt to salvage the crown’s power, Marie began opening secret negotiations with leaders from the Constituent Assembly in hopes of restoring power to the royal family through the help of others in favor of the same ideals. She frequently worked with other royals from her homeland of Austria, which only enraged and cause distrust in the French citizens as the country quickly entered a war with Austria and Prussia.

She was arrested after the storming of the Tuileries Palace, also known as the August 10th Insurrection. She spent the remainder of her life in various Parisian prisons.

The End

Marie Antoinette was accused of orchestrating orgies in Versailles, sending endless money to Austria, planning the 1792 massacre of the National Guards, declaring her son to be the King of France, and incest. She was declared guilty of the depletion of the national treasury, conspiracy against the security of the State, and high treason.

She was forced to wear white for the execution, despite wanting to wear black, her hair was shorn, her hands bound, and she was led by a rope leash. She was made to sit in an open cart for the hour long journey to the guillotine, during which time she was mocked, yelled at, and harassed by the crowds she passed by.

On October 16th, 1793, her last recorded words were *Pardonnez-moi, monsieur. Je ne l’ai pas fait exprès*, or “Pardon me, sir, I did not do it on purpose”, said after accidentally stepping on her executioner’s shoe.

The Women – Marianne Angelle

Who Is Marianne?

Marianne, unlike the other women in this play, is not based singularly on any one woman in history. According to playwright Lauren Gunderson, “she is a composite of a few historical sources and a lot of imagination. We don’t have many records of black *women* in the San Domingue rebellion. So I made them up.”

The name “Marianne” is a compound of “Marie,” which means rebellion (and is funnily enough the name of our remaining women at some point in their lives, birth or given), and “Anne,” translating to favor or grace.

The name “Marianne” was later used by patriots of the French Revolution as a way to recognize the feminine symbol that had emerged as the representation of liberty and the Republic overall, most famously portrayed in Eugène Delacroix’s painting, *La Liberté guidant le people*, or Liberty Leading the People.

This idea of “Marianne” became the national personification of liberty, equality, fraternity, and reason to the French, and statues of her can be found throughout France.

Marianne Angelle, in this play, has deep ties to The Haitian Revolution. While she represents liberty, equality, fraternity, and reason, she also is the representation of the many women who took part in The Haitian Revolution whose stories were not considered important enough to be written about. Many of their accomplishments have been lost to history. Marianne represents the women that did big things, who we know far too little about.

The Extras – Glossary

The definitions in this glossary were compiled by Robyn Quick, production dramaturg for The Revolutionists at Everyman Theatre.

Allons-y: A French phrase meaning "let's go."

Bastille: A medieval fortress in Paris used as a prison in the 18th and 19th centuries. Considered a symbol of the old, monarchial order, the Bastille was famously stormed by angry Parisians on July 14th, 1789 and was later demolished.

Brava: The feminine expression of "bravo", an expression of applause or approval.

Cathartic: Describes an event or story that releases strong, especially pent-up, emotions in its audience.

Comédie-Française: The national theatre of France and the world's longest-established state theatre.

Consummate: Extremely skilled or accomplished; of the highest degree.

Egalitarian: adhering to beliefs in the equality of all human beings in social, economic, and political affairs.

Égalité: French for "equality." Part of the motto of France: "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité," or, "Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood."

Exposé: A public piece of writing disclosing damaging or discrediting information.

Exposition: The introduction of background information in a narrative, usually near the beginning of the story.

Fleur-de-lis: A stylized image of a lily flower with three petals, commonly associated with the French royalty.

Frivolity: Lightheartedness, a lack of seriousness. Something unnecessary or silly.

Fugue: A rhetorical or musical composition structure in which one or two themes are repeated and interwoven with variations by successive voices.

Hyperbolic: Exaggerating or overstating the truth.

Jacobins: A powerful political group during the French Revolution in power between 1793-94 known for their extreme egalitarianism and violence.

Loquacious: Talkative, tending to talk overly much.

Maim: To permanently wound or injure someone.

Manifesto: A public declaration of aims, particularly of a political candidate or group.

Martyr: A person who willingly suffers death at the hands of someone wanting them to renounce a belief. Martyrs are often celebrated by those who share their beliefs after their deaths.

National Assembly: The revolutionary, parliamentary body formed by the common people during the French Revolution. The National Assembly opposed and eventually deposed King Louis XVI.

Oui, c'est vrai: French phrase meaning, "yes, it is true."

Place de la Revolution: A public square in Paris where many executions by guillotine were held during the Reign of Terror. Now called the Place de la Concorde.

Plutarch, Parallel Lives: A series of biographies of famous Greeks and Romans arranged in pairs to highlight their moral virtues and failings written by the Greek philosopher and essayist Plutarch during the first century.

Prologue: The introduction of a literary or dramatic work, usually setting the scene, introducing characters, and beginning themes.

Pundit: A person who delivers their opinions with (often overestimated) authority, usually through mass media such as writing, radio, or television.

Reign of Terror: The period of the French Revolution between 1793-94 when the Revolutionary government persecuted and executed more than 1,000 actual and perceived "enemies of the revolution."

The Republic: The First French Republic, the revolutionary government established by members of the Third Estate, or common people, between 1792 and 1804. The French government is now ruled by the Fifth French Republic.

Revisionism: A political, social, or historical philosophy favoring changing or evolving the status quo rather than completely throwing it out as in a revolution.

Sardonic: Disdainfully or skeptically humorous; derisively mocking; sarcastic.

Satirize: Deride and criticize using humor, irony, and exaggeration to expose the ridiculousness and the stupidity of others, particularly in regard to politics.

Slander: The crime of making a false statement damaging to a person's reputation.

Sociopolitical: The combination of social and political factors in sociological analysis of individuals and groups.

Sororité: French for "sisterhood."

Sovereignty: The authority of a state to govern itself; supreme power or authority.

Thomas Paine's Declaration: Thomas Paine, a Scottish immigrant to the United States, wrote his pamphlet The Rights of Man in 1791 after a visit to revolutionary France. Its central proposition is that revolution is permissible when government is not serving the needs of its people.

Torrid: Full of difficulty or tribulation; ardent, passionate.

Touché: "Touch" in French; said to acknowledge the validity of an opponent's point in debate or an opponent's hit in fencing.

Tribunal: A court of justice; board, panel.

Vigilante: A self-appointed doer of justice, sometimes a member of a group formed to undertake law enforcement when the government forces are perceived to be inadequate.

Vilify: To speak or write about in an abusively disparaging manner.

Vindication: Clearing someone of blame or suspicion.

Vive la Republic! Vive la France!: French patriotic expression, literally meaning "long live the Republic, long live France."

The Widow Capet: Referring to Marie Antoinette after the execution of her husband, King Louis XVI. The royal family was known by their surname Capet after September 21st, 1792, when the monarchy was officially deposed and the National Convention became the governing body of France.

Zealot: A person who is fanatical and uncompromising in pursuit of their religious, political, or other ideals.

The Extras – Playwright's Dramaturgy

Notes & Links

In addition to this dramaturgy website I've created, the playwright of *The Revolutionists* herself has compiled a wonderful collection of images, links, videos, and more as her own dramaturgy! The link to her full dramaturgical blog can be found below.

The Revolutionists Dramaturgy by Lauren Gunderson

How To Do The Play

Hi friends! Here're some of my thoughts for making THE REVOLUTIONISTS the best production of this play it can be. I'll add as I think of more but this get to some essentials.

Vive la play! - Lauren

COMEDY -The comedy is fast. The characters do not know they're in a comedy. The stakes are too high to even wait for the punchline. Keep going until we earn those beats and pauses. Wheeeeeee!

STAKES- These are actual life and death stakes, which, ironically, makes it all the more funny. The stakes keep raising as the play goes on. The bad guys are ever closer, the guillotine is rising to the top and could fall any minute.

OLYMPE - Olympe wants to be revolutionary but doesn't want the revolution. She is the absolute armchair activist. She wants to talk like a rebel poet, and get credit for the rebellion, but without getting in too much trouble, hurting her reputation, or messing with her career. She does not want to get bloody. She says she wants to change the world through art, but she really wants fame and praise. What she doesn't know until the end is that she wants sisters. She wants to be heard by them. She wants to be free of reputation or career and speak the truth of herself. That is the hardest thing for her to do and in the end, she does it with 3 women by her side.

MARIANNE - Marianne is fueled by both family and justice. The stakes for her are personal (her husband, kids) as well as political (the slavery in her country). She does not have time to save the souls of these white women and is rather shocked when Marie is the one to most fully acknowledge her pain. She is a working mom: half in the worry of her heart, and half in the work for justice that only she can do. She truly loves her husband and his loss is a knife to the gut. But he was a feminist activist too, and she uses his love to enhance her power to keep the fight going. She's funny too. She sings.

MARIE - Marie is more like a sail in the wind, being pushed around as the weather changes. She is hilarious. We know the most about her because history has told us to laugh at her so we will. But her true drive in this play is almost entirely personal for her. She is aware of politics but does not feel impacted by them. She has been resilient until now, what could possibly change? But we see her most fully human with Marianne as they share the grief of two widows. When we see her click into her deepest rage is when, at her trail, they attack her children. In that moment we see her become a mother bear, we see what she really cares about: her kids. Suddenly all that is silly about her vanishes and we should see a mother, a woman.

CHARLOTTE - She is propelled by the absolute conviction of youth. She has no family or career to put on the line. She only has her rage at injustice, her apoplectic response to hypocrisy, and her undying commitment to the cause. This cracks of course when she realizes that death is coming for her and coming fast. But she faces it like a true martyr without anything to lose but her life.

FEMINISM - The play is feminist and it should be intersectional. This is a universal story told in the hearts and bodies of women. They are not perfect, they are all flawed and struggling and tough. They are funny as hell and, in this play, that is one of the things that is most brave and badass: humor.

THE SONG - A whisper of an anthem that comforts and haunts them. It needn't be accompanied by orchestration at all. Acapella is the most pure and simple. You can find the sheet music at Dramatists and a sample of the song here: https://tmblr.co/ZwRlZqyywAK0

POLITICS - Hell yes this is political. The play is about a moment in history where the rich and poor were lightyear's apart in lifestyle, the country was in multiple wars, the debt was huge, the workers overtaxed, trust in the government was nil, the leaders were corrupt and greedy, racism, sexism, poverty, violence, extremism… The only difference between them and us is the year and the continent.

The Extras – Resources

Encyclopedia Britannica

History

History Crunch

The French Revolution: Crash Course European History #21

The French Revolution – Oversimplified (Part 1)

The French Revolution: Crash Course World History #29

Why 17,000 Were Executed During the Reign of Terror

Haitian Revolutions: Crash Course World History #30

The First and Last King of Haiti – Marlene Daut

Égalité for All: Toussaint Louverture & The Haitian Revolution

Marie Antoinette Explained in 13 Minutes

Marie Antoinette: The Last Queen of France Before the French Revolution

The Affair of the Diamond Necklace – Marie Antoinette – Extra History

Stealing The World's Most Expensive Necklace – Puppet History

The Revolutionists Dramaturgy by Lauren Gunderson

Godineau, Dominique. *The Women of Paris and Their French Revolution* (1998) 440 pp 1998.

Kelly, Linda. *Women of the French Revolution* (1987) 192 pp. biographical portraits or prominent writers and activists.

Proctor, Candice E. *Women, Equality, and the French Revolution* (Greenwood Press, 1990)

Quick, Robyn. *Production Dramaturgy for The Revolutionists at Everyman Theatre*. (Issue, 2017)