



# The Death of Royalty: The Lives and Executions of King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette

By Charles River Editors

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\*Includes famous art depicting Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, and important people, places, and events in their lives.

\*Includes a discussion of their roles in the American and French Revolutions.

\*Includes a comprehensive discussion of their trials and executions.

“I die perfectly innocent of the so-called crimes of which I am accused. I pardon those who are the cause of my misfortunes.” – Louis XVI

“I was a queen, and you took away my crown; a wife, and you killed my husband; a mother, and you deprived me of my children. My blood alone remains: take it, but do not make me suffer long.” – Marie Antoinette

Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette are among France's most famous royalty, but for reasons they would have much rather avoided. Coming of age in the wake of the reign of the Sun King, Louis XIV, and his father, Louis XV, Louis XVI initially intended to be one of France's most enlightened Kings. Instead, he was destined to be the only French King ever executed. Indeed, it is his death and his role in fomenting the French Revolution (along with his infamous Queen, Marie Antoinette) that continue to play the central role in Louis XVI's legacy.

Throughout history, a countless number of historical figures have had their lives overshadowed by the myths and legends that surround them to the extent that their legacy comes to define them. In French history, this is truer of Marie Antoinette than just about everyone else. Nearly 220 years after she was put to the guillotine, Marie Antoinette is more famous than ever, fairly or unfairly coming to epitomize royalty and everything that was wrong with it. Since her death, Marie Antoinette has been the subject of sharp historical debate over whether she was actually a catalyst in the French Revolution or simply an insignificant scapegoat who was unfairly made a target. At the same time, the one thing everybody associates with Antoinette is the phrase “Let them eat cake”, a spoiled and ignorant comment supposedly made in response to being informed that the peasants had no bread. While that phrase has been used far and wide to depict someone as being out of touch, there's no indication Antoinette ever said anything like it. Nevertheless, she remains a pop culture fixture across the West, perceived just as negatively in death as she was in life.

The Death of Royalty explains the couple's role in two of history's most famous revolutions, looks at the life of the famous, ill-fated Royal Family, attempts to separate fact from fiction and analyzes their legacies. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette like you never have before, in no time at all.

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