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The Bad Queen: Rules And Instructions For Marie-Antoinette



Synopsis

History paints her as a shallow party girl, a spoiled fashionista, a callous ruler. Perhaps no other royal has been so maligned—and so misunderstood—as Marie-Antoinette. From the moment she was betrothed to the dauphin of France at age fourteen, perfection was demanded of Marie-Antoinette. She tried to please everyone—courtiers, her young husband, the king, the French people—but often fell short of their expectations. Desperate for affection and subjected to constant scrutiny, this spirited young woman can't help but want to let loose with elaborate parties, scandalous fashions, and unimaginable luxuries. But as Marie-Antoinette's lifestyle gets ever-more recklessly extravagant, the peasants of France are suffering from increasing poverty—and becoming outraged. They want to make the queen pay. In this latest installment of her acclaimed Young Royals series, Carolyn Meyer reveals the dizzying rise and horrific downfall of the last queen of France. Includes historical notes, an author's note, and a bibliography.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 990L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 432 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; 1 edition (April 12, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0152063765

ISBN-13: 978-0152063764

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.4 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 46 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,388,600 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #60 in [Books > Teens >](#)

[Historical Fiction > Biographical > European](#) #173 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > European](#) #1219 in [Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Europe](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 6-9 This novel about the ill-fated queen covers her life from age 13 when, as an Austrian princess, she prepares to marry the French dauphin to her death by guillotine in 1793. The final section is told by her daughter Marie-Therese, the only family member to survive the Revolution.

Meyer writes in a lighthearted, casual style, vividly portraying the historical era and aptly defining unfamiliar vocabulary. However, Marie-Antoinette's occasional sympathy for the poor and interest in politics is inconsistent with her flighty, self-indulgent character as presented in most of the book. (Frankly, she comes across as a total airhead.) In addition, after the first 100 pages, *The Bad Queen* turns into a speedy recitation of events, skipping through years at a time with little insight or development and little spark or personality from the narrators. Kimberley Brubaker Bradley's fascinating novel *The Lacemaker and the Princess* (S & S, 2007) features Marie-Therese and does an excellent job of integrating events leading up to the French Revolution with life at the palace of Versailles. Although it doesn't have as much material on Marie-Antoinette, it's more interesting and better written. Ann W. Moore, Schenectady County Public Library, NY Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

In this latest *Young Royals* tale, Meyer portrays the teenage Austrian princess Marie Antoinette, sent to France in marriage by her mother, who might there be a sympathetic figure behind the persona of the woman mainly known for her extravagance and gruesome end? With the gorgeous clothes, sumptuous surroundings, and seemingly limitless wealth, Marie becomes a prisoner of royal pomp and circumstance with no concept of governance or political savvy as France descends into a revolutionary bloodbath. Historical-fiction fans will be swept up in the cruel fates of the monarchs and political forces, particularly as the drama escalates into horror. Grades 7-10. --Anne O'Malley

If you are interested in the lives and customs of royalty then you will love this book. It puts flesh and blood to the villain of the French Revolution. You understand her actions and even feel sympathetic for her after this book. The dialogue and interactions in this book are completely natural. I full heartedly recommend and the seller was on time with the delivery and generous on the price.

The queen is a little naive about what shall be expected of her to govern beside her husband. Even though she is not allowed to have any real political power, Louis still values Marie's opinion on everything. Of course, all of the people blame the queen for the problems they are facing and she is an easy scapegoat being that she has no limits on her spending. I do not understand why Marie could not see the dangers when it came to living a life this way when all of France was starving, except for the rich people. The story starts off fun with Marie having plenty of servants, rich fabrics for her wardrobe, and the endless instructions she must get use to. In this book court etiquette plays

an important part. The young queen decides to make up her own rules when she becomes queen. However, she is not aware of the warnings that come with being queen. She tries to curb her spending, but this does not satisfy the people. **THEY WANT HER BLOOD AND NOTHING WILL SATISFY THEM!** I love how the author makes the reader feel that Marie's life will be nothing but parties, theater acting, and endless mindless gossip. We are swept up into her world of illusions and it all comes crashing down when the monarchy is abolished. No more kings and queens for France. They want a republic now. Marie loses her servants, status as queen, husband, what little power she had, children, and eventually her head. The same fate happens for her husband as well. On a strange note, the story picks up with her daughter. I found this interesting being that Marie's daughter has a story of her own. She eventually tells the tragic end to her mother's life. But she escapes with her freedom, married, but becomes a wanderer throughout her entire life. She is made Queen of France, along with her husband, but only for half an hour. Seeing what happened to her parents, I do not believe being Queen of France is something that the young princess looked forward to.

Carolyn Meyer uses a clever technique for each chapter in this retelling of the Marie Antoinette story. Each chapter begins with "Rules and Instructions" she must learn in order to become the proper Queen of France. She never quite gets it, however and you know what happens. The author thoroughly entertains with her lovely writing style. The poor doomed king and queen are sympathetic, three dimensional characters. Excellent read.

Very good read. Let's you into the life of Marie Antoinette and how she lived her life and how the French regarded her.

Not a bad book, but not very insightful. It's the usual novel-ization of a historical biography. Read quickly, and I engaged with the characters (they flash by rather quickly, though), but still a little superficial in that you never really understand and sympathize with why M.A. acted as she did. Still, it is a young adult book, not a scholarly tome, but would be more meaningful if it developed some sense of why the primary character ignored so many signs leading her to a sad end (you do feel sorry for her, and the execution scene is described in a sympathetic way).

I bought this book for my daughter and she absolutely loved it. She now wants to read more of Carolyn Meyer's books.

Great historical fiction. A reader grows to understand the royal family and feel sorry for this Bad Queen, who came to a bad end.

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