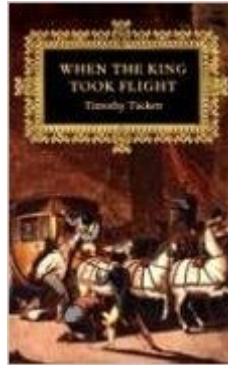




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# When The King Took Flight



## Synopsis

On a June night in 1791, King Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette fled Paris in disguise, hoping to escape the mounting turmoil of the French Revolution. They were arrested by a small group of citizens a few miles from the Belgian border and forced to return to Paris. Two years later they would both die at the guillotine. It is this extraordinary story, and the events leading up to and away from it, that Tackett recounts in gripping novelistic style. The king's flight opens a window to the whole of French society during the Revolution. Each dramatic chapter spotlights a different segment of the population, from the king and queen as they plotted and executed their flight, to the people of Varennes who apprehended the royal family, to the radicals of Paris who urged an end to monarchy, to the leaders of the National Assembly struggling to control a spiraling crisis, to the ordinary citizens stunned by their king's desertion. Tackett shows how Louis's flight reshaped popular attitudes toward kingship, intensified fears of invasion and conspiracy, and helped pave the way for the Reign of Terror. Tackett brings to life an array of unique characters as they struggle to confront the monumental transformations set in motion in 1789. In so doing, he offers an important new interpretation of the Revolution. By emphasizing the unpredictable and contingent character of this story, he underscores the power of a single event to change irrevocably the course of the French Revolution, and consequently the history of the world.

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## Customer Reviews

Historian Tackett (UC-Irvine) skillfully shows how Louis XVI's infamous failed flight from his revolutionary captors in Paris in 1791 led to the eventual victory of radicalism and strengthened

those calling for terror to "protect" the revolution from its enemies. Attempting to escape across the border to the Austrian Netherlands, the king planned to march a counterrevolutionary army back into France and reestablish Bourbon rule. As Tackett's dramatic account makes clear, Louis very nearly succeeded. He was famously halted in Varennes, a few miles from the border, and forcibly returned to Paris. Tackett describes the nation's reaction to the king's flight and return, not just in Paris but also in the provinces, where widespread fears of foreign invasion immediately followed news of Louis's escape. The whole nation felt betrayed by their "father," and Louis's public image was destroyed. The flight to Varennes, Tackett shows, strengthened republicanism and weakened those moderates favoring a constitutional monarchy. Louis's flight also created factionalism in the Assembly and was thus a harbinger of the Terror to come. Jacobins called for the king's immediate removal, but the moderates won the day in the short term, and Louis was reinstituted as a constitutional monarch. The Jacobins bided their time, and in September 1792, they voted to dethrone Louis and declare a republic; a few months later, they voted to execute the king. Tackett has penned a highly accessible popular history that should appeal to those wanting to learn more about one of the central events of the French Revolution. 24 illus., 3 maps. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

For scholars and general readers alike, the French Revolution remains a perennially favorite historical event. And one of the most intriguing as well as pivotal occurrences in the whole revolutionary period took place on the night of June 21, 1791, when "something quite extraordinary did happen" that "changed the history of France." In the little town of Varennes, in northeast France near the border of what is now Belgium, townspeople halted the progress of Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette and the rest of the royal family on their disguised flight from the country to escape the growing frightfulness of the Revolution. The entire planning process of their run for freedom is explained here with almost thriller-novel-like tension. The royal family's disguise was seen through by the time they arrived in Varennes, and their forced return to Paris proved traumatic. Tackett explores the ramifications of the event on the direction the Revolution subsequently took--namely, toward terror and republicanism. The book's approachable style, clear ideas, and excellent pacing guarantee general readership interest. Brad Hooper Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is a cross between scholarly and pop history, leaning more toward the former. But it's so beautifully written and well organized, with a fascinating topic, that anyone with even slight interest

in history would probably enjoy it. Tackett opens the book with the amazing story of the abrupt end to the flight of King Louis XVI and his family. They were stopped in Varennes as they tried to pass through on their way out of the country during the third year of the French Revolution. Later Tackett details all that went into planning the escape, which is one of the most fascinating moments of the Revolution. But the ramifications and aftermath of this attempted escape are even more important, and Tackett does a reasonable job explaining why. However, this is the one area where he falls a bit short. He argues that the king's flight and the aftermath led to the Terror, but he didn't spend enough time explaining why, which is surprising since that seemed to be a main part of his thesis. Nevertheless, it's a great read and highly recommended.

Extremely interesting way of describing this critical event in the revolution. Begins with the details of the French royal family's attempted flight to safety and then describes in separate chapters how different groups were affected by the king's attempted departure. Tackett presents the concerns and pressures on each group in a compassionate way and thereby provides an introduction to the driving forces of the Revolution, especially for people like me who knew nothing about the Revolution. Covers only the summer of their ill-fated flight but covers it in great and interesting detail.

I choose these rating because when I visited Varennes in France I decided to find a book in which I could find out what happened. I can only say, to visit a historical place and then to read about events that is the greatest thing. But the story must be well written and so I can only recommend these book to all interested in history full of intrigues and games and final in destiny of those people who in crucial moment shows only their weakest points and ruins theirs and other lives. Sorry but King Louis the XVI was such a weak man. But in history of mankind other follows and their bad decisions had bad follows in historical events .

Very well-done. I read it to prep for teaching my college course that begins with The Enlightenment and the French Revolution. There is A LOT of detail about the escape of the Royal Family and his argument for it's significant as a turning point in the Revolution is an important distinction and compelling. However, the book includes other information about the Revolution, so it can serve as a source for the Revolution as a whole as well.

The Flight of the King from Paris was an event that shook the core of the revolution. Tackett is a

great French Revolution historian and he does not disappoint here. The book is easy to read and stays on topic making you think about the idea of causality in the revolution. Tackett takes a great deal of time to explain how the flight of the king changed the opinion of the people in France. He does so very well and makes for a very interesting book. For those studying the revolution this is a must read about a crucial moment that changed the course of the revolution shifting it over to violence that had not been seen prior the flight of the king.

A wonderful book. Reads like fiction with fascinating details. I'd recommend for anyone who likes history, nonfiction, historical fiction, or French culture.

Well researched, but really slow. Worth it if you're interested in the period.

Wonderful re-intro to hows and whys of that era.

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