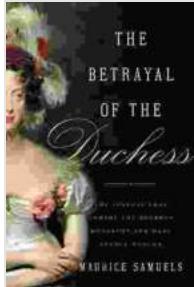


The Scandal That Unmade the Bourbon Monarchy and Made France Modern

The Diamond Necklace Affair was a scandal that rocked the French court in the 1780s and played a significant role in the decline of the Bourbon monarchy and the outbreak of the French Revolution.



The Betrayal of the Duchess: The Scandal That Unmade the Bourbon Monarchy and Made France Modern

by Maurice Samuels

4.3 out of 5

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The affair began in 1772 when King Louis XV ordered a magnificent diamond necklace for his mistress, Madame du Barry. The necklace was made by the jeweler Charles Auguste de Rohan, Prince of Soubise. However, du Barry was never to receive the necklace. In 1774, Louis XV died and was succeeded by his grandson, Louis XVI. Louis XVI and his wife, Marie Antoinette, were not as indulgent as Louis XV had been, and they refused to pay for the necklace.

In 1785, a woman named Jeanne de Valois-Saint-Rémy, who claimed to be the illegitimate daughter of Louis XV, approached Cardinal de Rohan, the Bishop of Strasbourg. Jeanne told Rohan that she had been authorized by the Queen to purchase the necklace on her behalf. Rohan, who was hoping to gain favor with the Queen, agreed to help Jeanne. He borrowed the money from a jeweler named Boehmer and gave it to Jeanne.

However, Jeanne had no intention of buying the necklace for the Queen. Instead, she and her accomplices sold the diamonds and pocketed the money. When Boehmer realized that he had been swindled, he went to the police. The police arrested Jeanne and her accomplices, and the scandal became public.

The Diamond Necklace Affair was a major embarrassment for the French monarchy. The public was outraged that the Queen had been involved in such a scandal, and they began to lose faith in the monarchy. The affair also weakened the position of Marie Antoinette, who was already unpopular with the French people. The Diamond Necklace Affair is often seen as a turning point in the history of France. It marked the beginning of the decline of the Bourbon monarchy and the rise of the French Revolution.

The Key Players

- **Marie Antoinette:** Queen of France and wife of Louis XVI. She was accused of being involved in the Diamond Necklace Affair and her reputation was severely damaged as a result.
- **Louis XVI:** King of France from 1774 to 1793. He was a weak and indecisive ruler who was unable to control the events of the Diamond Necklace Affair.

- **Cardinal de Rohan:** Bishop of Strasbourg and a close associate of Marie Antoinette. He was tricked into believing that Jeanne de Valois-Saint-Rémy was authorized by the Queen to purchase the necklace on her behalf.
- **Jeanne de Valois-Saint-Rémy:** A woman who claimed to be the illegitimate daughter of Louis XV. She tricked Cardinal de Rohan into giving her the money to buy the necklace, which she then sold for her own profit.
- **Charles Auguste de Rohan, Prince of Soubise:** The jeweler who made the diamond necklace for Louis XV.
- **Boehmer:** The jeweler who loaned Cardinal de Rohan the money to buy the necklace.

The Necklace

The diamond necklace was one of the most expensive and elaborate pieces of jewelry ever made. It was made of 647 diamonds and weighed over 2,800 carats. The necklace was so heavy that it had to be supported by a ribbon when it was worn.

The necklace was originally intended for Madame du Barry, but she never received it. After Louis XV died, the necklace was returned to the royal treasury. In 1785, Cardinal de Rohan purchased the necklace for Jeanne de Valois-Saint-Rémy, who claimed to be acting on behalf of the Queen. However, Jeanne sold the diamonds and pocketed the money.

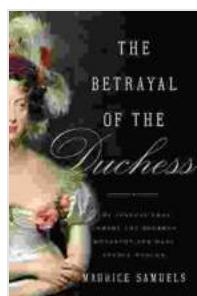
The Trial

After the Diamond Necklace Affair became public, Jeanne de Valois-Saint-Rémy and her accomplices were arrested. They were tried in a public trial that lasted for several months. Jeanne was found guilty of fraud and sentenced to life in prison. Her accomplices were also found guilty and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

Cardinal de Rohan was also implicated in the affair. He was tried in a separate trial and found guilty of complicity in fraud. He was sentenced to be exiled from France.

The Aftermath

The Diamond Necklace Affair had a profound impact on French society. The public was outraged by the scandal and they began to lose faith in the monarchy. The affair also weakened the position of Marie Antoinette, who was already unpopular with the French people. The Diamond Necklace Affair is often seen as a turning point in the history of France. It marked the beginning



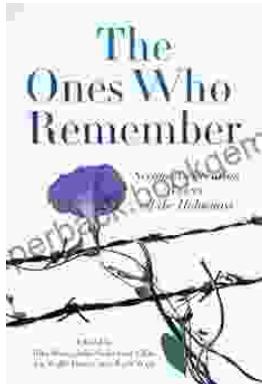
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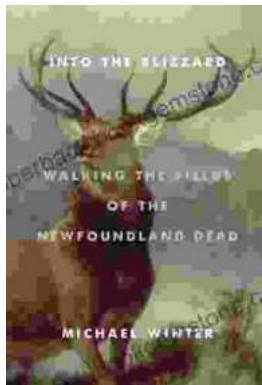
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