



Madame Tussaud: A Novel of the French Revolution

Michelle Moran

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The world knows Madame Tussaud as a wax artist extraordinaire . . . but who was this woman who became one of the most famous sculptresses of all time? In these pages, her tumultuous and amazing story comes to life as only Michelle Moran can tell it. The year is 1788, and a revolution is about to begin.

Smart and ambitious, Marie Tussaud has learned the secrets of wax sculpting by working alongside her uncle in their celebrated wax museum, the Salon de Cire. From her popular model of the American ambassador, Thomas Jefferson, to her tableau of the royal family at dinner, Marie's museum provides Parisians with the very latest news on fashion, gossip, and even politics. Her customers hail from every walk of life, yet her greatest dream is to attract the attention of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI; their stamp of approval on her work could catapult her and her museum to the fame and riches she desires. After months of anticipation, Marie learns that the royal family is willing to come and see their likenesses. When they finally arrive, the king's sister is so impressed that she requests Marie's presence at Versailles as a royal tutor in wax sculpting. It is a request Marie knows she cannot refuse—even if it means time away from her beloved Salon and her increasingly dear friend, Henri Charles.

As Marie gets to know her pupil, Princesse Élisabeth, she also becomes acquainted with the king and queen, who introduce her to the glamorous life at court. From lavish parties with more delicacies than she's ever seen to rooms filled with candles lit only once before being discarded, Marie steps into a world entirely different from her home on the Boulevard du Temple, where people are selling their teeth in order to put food on the table.

Meanwhile, many resent the vast separation between rich and poor. In salons and cafés across Paris, people like Camille Desmoulins, Jean-Paul Marat, and Maximilien Robespierre are lashing out against the monarchy. Soon, there's whispered talk of revolution. . . . Will Marie be able to hold on to both the love of her life and her friendship with the royal family as France approaches civil war? And more important, will she be able to fulfill the demands of powerful revolutionaries who ask that she make the death masks of beheaded aristocrats, some of whom she knows?

Spanning five years, from the budding revolution to the Reign of Terror, *Madame Tussaud* brings us into the world of an incredible heroine whose talent for wax modeling saved her life and preserved the faces of a vanished kingdom.

From the Hardcover edition.

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