

**BONUS  
MATERIAL**

Your planning guide to a French Revolution-themed book club event for  
*Ribbons of Scarlet*, including deleted scenes, recipes, and more!

# RIBBONS *of* SCARLET

A NOVEL OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION'S WOMEN



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## ABOUT THE BOOK:

Six bestselling and award-winning authors bring to life a breathtaking epic novel illuminating the hopes, desires, and destinies of princesses and peasants, harlots and wives, fanatics and philosophers—six unforgettable women whose paths cross during one of the most tumultuous and transformative events in history:

**The French Revolution**

# SANTÉ! DRINK LIKE A REVOLUTIONARY, PHILOSOPHER *or* ROYALIST...

BOOK CLUBS AND WINE ARE A PERFECT PAIRING, AND AS IT HAPPENS,  
SO IS LIQUOR AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

**Nothing is more French than wine...** At the time of the Revolution, wine was extremely popular across all levels of society—from champagne-sipping châteaux dwellers to the red-wine-favoring working class. By 1789, when Sophie de Grouchy visited Versailles, wine was a daily drink for a majority of Parisians, with approximately seventy-nine gallons consumed yearly per adult male in the capital. All that wine was a significant source of cash for the Ancien Régime. Taxes on alcoholic beverages entering Paris raised more money than consumption taxes on all other commodities combined, and the rate was steep. The price of a barrel of wine tripled as it passed through Paris's tollgates.

**And that, dear readers, is where alcoholic beverages and the French Revolution became partners...** The good citizens were tired of the tax-inflated prices of their favorite beverage. While some stormed the Bastille, other Parisians made a four-day assault on the city's tollgates. They destroyed seventy percent of them, and triumphantly rolled carts full of tax-free wine into the city. Some happy soul, doubtless after tapping into one of the celebratory barrels, actually scrawled: "finally we will drink wine at 3 sous, for too long we have been paying 12," on the barrier de Neuilly.

**Striving for equality means material equality too...** When the National Constituent Assembly debated how to reform the tax on wine, a number of legislators used the same Revolutionary rhetoric of fairness—insisting "equality be made material"—employed in more lofty Revolutionary discussions. Ultimately the Assembly abolished the wine tax under tremendous pressure from the people of France. It officially ended on May 1, 1791 and, according to journalist Camille Desmoulins, over 400 wine-filled wagons entered

Paris on the stroke of midnight. Later in the Revolution a parody of the La Marseillaise commemorated this victory in the following refrain: "To the table citizens, empty all the bottles: drink, drink a good pure wine which waters our lungs."

**As the Revolution progressed, a Frenchwoman's (or Frenchman's) choice of alcoholic beverage became increasingly political...** In fact, as was true with what one wore, what one drank was seen as indicative of her/his political allegiance. Strident revolutionaries like the Jacobins and sans-culottes drank common red wine, while white wine and champagne remained associated with royalist-leaning aristos (a word fierce market-woman Louise Audu would certainly have pronounced with contempt). Princess Élisabeth, her brother the king, and her sister-in-law Marie Antoinette would certainly have initially enjoyed grands crus (luxury wines) even as they were held captive at the Tuileries . . . although those same wines were forbidden by the time Charlotte Corday arrived in Paris to assassinate Marat.

**Just as they are for many book clubs, wine and other spirits were at the center of many Revolutionary-era festivities...** During the course of the Revolution, citizens of France repeatedly shared wine at social and communal gatherings, toasting their newfound freedoms. Let's all raise a glass to that!



So much for the history...let's get to the booze! Just answer one question and discover your perfect drink to accompany *Ribbons of Scarlet*.

## ARE YOU A REVOLUTIONARY, A PHILOSOPHER, OR AN ARISTOCRAT?

### A REVOLUTIONARY!

I LONG FOR MY OWN BONNET ROUGE AND WOULD HAVE MARCHED IN THE STREETS WITH LOUISE AUDU AND PAULINE LEON...

No multiple-ingredient, fancy mixing will be necessary. Just grab a wine glass and fill it with red (the cheaper the better).



#### Pinot Noir:

A light red wine that pairs well with many foods

#### Merlot:

A medium-bodied, easy to drink red wine

#### Cabernet Sauvignon:

A full-bodied, dry red wine

### A PHILOSOPHER!

I WIELD IDEAS NOT A PIKE, AND I'D LOVE TO ATTEND A SALON WITH SOPHIE DE GROUCHY OR MANON ROLAND.

What could be more perfect than a brandy-based cocktail to nurse as you mull over political nuances?



#### RECIPE: THE PHILOSOPHE

##### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- A brandy snifter or cocktail glass of your choice (either works for a leather-armchair-idealist, don't you think?)
  - 1 1/2 oz. cognac
  - 1 oz. Bénédictine
  - 1 oz. Cointreau
- 3 oz. champagne (left out on the counter by the aristocrats, because that is the way the world works)
- Orange peel curl for garnish if you're feeling fancy.

Put the cognac, Bénédictine and Cointreau into your glass, top with room temperature bubbly and give a quick stir.

Settle into your chair for a long discussion of *Ribbons of Scarlet* or any philosophical point that tickles your fancy. cocktail will do. And the touch of red shows your sangfroid even in the face of the Terror's blade.

### AN ARISTOCRAT!

YES, I MAY END UP RIDING TO THE GUILLOTINE IN A TUMBREL BUT AT LEAST I'LL BE IN COMPANY WITH THE LIKES OF MADAME ÉLISABETH AND EMILIE DE SAINTE-AMARANTHE.

Nothing but a champagne based cocktail will do. And the touch of red shows your sangfroid even in the face of the Terror's blade.



#### RECIPE: THE ARISTO

##### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- A champagne flute (the taller and more elegant the better)
  - .75 oz. St. Germain Elderflower Liqueur
  - 1 oz. Chambord
  - 1 teaspoon lemon juice (fresh tastes best)
  - A few fresh raspberries
- French Champagne (or your favorite sparkling wine)

Place a few fresh raspberries in the bottom of your flute. Add the St. Germain, Chambord and Lemon juice, then fill with chilled champagne. Toast the King and *Ribbons of Scarlet*.

# BOOK CLUB MENUS INSPIRED *by the* FRENCH REVOLUTION

“WITH BREAD, ALL SORROWS ARE LESS.” ~ DON QUIXOTE

During the French Revolution, cuisine shaped history and history changed the culture of food. One of the most essential elements of French cuisine—bread—was at the heart of the 1789 uprising. Food historian Linda Civitello writes,

**“BREAD WAS CONSIDERED A PUBLIC SERVICE NECESSARY TO KEEP THE PEOPLE FROM RIOTING. BAKERS, THEREFORE, WERE PUBLIC SERVANTS, AND THE POLICE CONTROLLED ALL ASPECTS OF BREAD PRODUCTION.”**

The average French worker in the 1780s spent half his daily wage on bread. During the crop failures of 1788 and 1789, it increased to as high as 88% of wages. Many blamed the ruling class for the resulting famine, food shortages, and economic upheaval which ultimately toppled the monarchy, as physical hunger and the hunger for liberté, égalité, fraternité entwined, becoming the impetus for the French Revolution.

After the Revolution, changes to French society laid the foundation for what we today think of as modern restaurants. The old regulations controlling who could be a butcher, a baker, or a cheesemaker were gone, making it easier to open various kinds of eateries. And since so many aristocrats had fled—or been executed, their former cooks and servants had to find new employment. Parisian restaurant culture was born.



# PARTY LIKE *an* ARISTOCRAT!

(AND IF YOU WISH TO LIVE DANGEROUSLY, WEAR BOURBON ALL-WHITE, YELLOW, OR PURPLE COLORS ASSOCIATED WITH SUPPORT FOR THE MONARCHY!)

## AT BRUNCH:

This brunch menu is inspired by what the royal family had while imprisoned:

Fruit (apples, pears, oranges)  
Rolls or Croquettes (rolls filled with truffles and cream cheese)  
Loaves of bread: brioche, wheat, milk  
Powdered and lump sugar  
Cold Syrup  
Coffee, Chocolate with thick cream, and barley water to drink

This menu is courtesy of Madame de Genlis, a French writer known for her detailed observations about French life and for this 1799 description of upper-class breakfast fare:

**Breads:** wheat, milk, black rye  
Eggs

**Cheeses:** soft, cream, gruyère, gloucester, dutch, or parmesan

**Hot Meats:** sausages, ham, bacon

**Cold Meats for Sandwiches:** veal, mutton

**Vegetables:** capers, radishes, artichokes

**Fruits:** lemons, oranges  
Biscuits

Cakes and Pastries

Oysters and Anchovies

Butter, Salt, Spices, Jam, Almond Milk

**Drinks:** tea, chocolate, coffee, wine, beer

## AT LUNCH OR DINNER:

This menu is courtesy of a 1788 cookbook:

Turkey stuffed with truffles  
Pâté de foie gras  
Partridge pâtés  
Hams  
Cooked tongue

This menu is informed by what a typical dinner for members of the royal family looked like before the revolution:

### First course:

Soup (such as pumpkin)  
Roasted or stewed meat (lamb or cold beef)  
Poultry or seafood (such as sole or skate)

### Second (main) course:

Meat and poultry  
Vegetables and salad (such as turnips and potatoes)

### Third course:

Cheese  
Fruit (apples or pears, or cherries in brandy)  
Pastries such as mille-feuille (today's napoleons) which were held together by layers of jam instead of today's cream  
Meringues  
Cakes soaked in wine  
Various pâtés  
Champagne

Or try eating dinner like the royals did while they were imprisoned:

Three soups

Four entrees of meat

Two roasts

One side dish

**Dessert:** pears, other fruit, jam, butter, sugar, oil, champagne

Wines from Bordeaux, Malvoise, and

Madeira

Coffee



# Wear **Red**, **White**, and **Blue** and Party Like A Working-Class Rebel!

## AT BRUNCH:

Enjoy le petit déjeuner or little breakfast with a selection of cheeses and fruit and, for a very special occasion, meat. Potatoes became a staple of the rural and working-class population, so try them hashed, diced, or sliced in a skillet if boiled doesn't sound appealing. Oatmeal would be a modern interpretation of the gruel made from boiled grain that was the staple of many peasants' diets. In addition, serve coffee or, on more special occasions, hot chocolate with vanilla, sugar, and cinnamon. Or offer wine and brandy which were consumed by many workers in the morning.

## AT LUNCH OR DINNER:

Farmers' and working-class diets were often determined by what was in season since bread had to be made from whatever grains were grown locally, so consider:



Wheat or rye breads  
Wafers or pastries  
Chestnut flour biscuits with jam



When the crops failed in 1788 and 1789, grains and breads became expensive and scarce, so nix the breads and seek inspiration in this April 1789 description of a meal: "six courses, more like hors d'oeuvres than anything, and including black puddings, sausages, pâtés, a couple of joints of meat, two roast fowls, four kinds of sweets, two mixed salads."

Other choices when bread was in short supply:

Mushrooms and truffles

Asparagus (the tips were mixed with egg yolks and truffles)

Hard cheeses and curds

Cider and liqueurs (such as brandy, cognac, anisette, or calvados (made from apples))

Wine

# SAMPLE HISTORICAL RECIPES

## ECONOMICAL SOUP FOR THE POOR

Cook 2 bushels of potatoes, peel and purée them, then put in a pot.

Add 12 pounds of bread, cut in slices

1 quarter of a bushel of onions

1/2 pound salt

1/2 pound of lard cut in small pieces (or grease, or butter)

30 pints water\*

Frozen potatoes can be used if reduced in powder before putting them into the pot with the other ingredients.

From Affiches au Dauphiné, Almanach de 1789.

\*In the recipe, this is written as 30 pints. The French old measure pinte is .93 liter, or roughly a quart. Today, the pint is half a quart.



## SAVOY CAKE

4 eggs, separated

1 tablespoon minced crystallized orange blossom (or other flowers) (optional)

1 tablespoon flaked almonds

100 g crystallized sugar

1 tablespoon minced pistachios

1 tablespoon crystallized lemon peel, finely chopped

200 g sieved flour

zest of a lime

Put the eggs on one of the scales, and on the other (scale) put the powdered sugar; the weight of the eggs should equal that of the sugar. Next, remove the sugar leaving half the eggs which should equal the weight of the flour to be used.

Separate the whites and yolks and beat the whites as hard as possible. Then put in the yolks and continue beating.

Add the sugar, followed by the flour, lime zest and a few leaves of chopped, candied orange blossom, if available.

Butter a mold or casserole and empty the mixture into it, sprinkling over it a few lightly caramelized finely chopped almonds and pistachios and the glazed lemon peel.

Cook in a moderate oven for an hour and a half. Remove from the oven and take it out of the mold and if it is a good color, serve it. Alternatively you can cover it with a white icing, or glaze it with a little syrup and sprinkle small pellets of multicolored decorating sugar over.

Serve for dessert.

# DELETED SCENES FROM *RIBBONS of SCARLET*

WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO SQUEEZE AN HISTORICAL EVENT AS ENORMOUS AND EXCITING AS THE FRENCH REVOLUTION BETWEEN THE COVERS OF A NOVEL, IT'S INEVITABLE THAT SCENES WILL BE CLIPPED TO KEEP THE OVERALL STORY RACING FORWARD. HERE ARE SOME SCENES FROM *RIBBONS OF SCARLET* THAT ULTIMATELY FELL TO THE EDITING ROOM FLOOR.... STARTING WITH A GRUELING RIDE TO PARIS AFTER THE ROYALS WERE CAPTURED, VIEWED THROUGH THE EYES OF PRINCESS ÉLISABETH.

## A GLIMPSE OF THE ROYAL FAMILY

By Sophie Perinot

What my eyes have seen and ears have heard in these last three-dozen hours will never be forgotten.

I wonder, do I look as my niece and nephew—like a silent, frightened rabbit, eyes wide with terror and rimmed with tears? I am glad I have no mirror. Whatever my appearance, my soul is exhausted, my clothing is drenched in sweat, and still we are nowhere near Paris. So accustomed have we grown to unexpected interruptions in our journey, that as the berline comes to a stop, no one bothers to look out the windows.

Perhaps we are not so much numb, as afraid of what we might see.

Yesterday, we saw an elderly Count murdered—shot, trampled, and cut to ribbons by saber, merely for taking his hat off to his king. Members of the crowd carry the poor man's bloody coat which they delight in waving at us. Last evening, the guard prevented young girls at Châtions from presenting Antoinette with flowers, while in the background their mothers wept, doubtless remembering the Queen's glorious bridal procession through that town when they themselves were young.

Generally when we halt the crowd becomes louder, but this time there is quiet. It is half-past seven, can we be stopping for the night? No, a glance out the window reveals we are in the middle of nowhere on some nondescript piece of road.

Three men approach, dressed like gentlemen, but they are not. I have seen them in the halls of the Tuileries; they belong to the Assembly. I would class very few members of that body as gentlemen.

I glance at my brother. "As if the heat were not enough, now God sends deputies from the Assembly to plague us."

Louis makes no reply. Yesterday, I do not believe he spoke above ten words. I know he blames himself for everything that went awry, but I also know it is too early for him to hear reason or take comfort. So I have offered neither.

One of the men steps to the window. "Your Majesty, I am Deputy Barnave. We have come from Paris to assure your safe return."

"Have you?" the King asks.

If Barnave perceives the touch of sarcasm in my brother's voice, his face does not show it. "Yes, Your Majesty. And to assist in this task we have brought an able military commander to"—a pause, glancing at the collection of National Guard members intermingled with the larger crowd—"bring the somewhat disorganized state of your escort into order."



King Louix XVI via Wikimedia Commons

Order! Even if imposed by someone I consider an enemy, it will be welcome—especially if it brings a modicum of safety. My mind turns to our three loyal guards, bound and gagged atop the berline. Just a few hours past, when an angry crowd blocked the road, they were threatened with hanging. Only the application of the carriage driver's whip to those who tried to climb on to the vehicle prevented disaster.

The gospel of Saint Matthew . . . Even if I would not stoop to beg an Assemblyman on my own behalf, I must do so on behalf of our guards. What I do for others I do also unto God.

The deputy's hand rests on the windowsill. Boldly, I take it in mine. "Monsieur, if you would ensure the safety of this party, do not fail to look to the three gentlemen riding bound atop this carriage. I beg you, on your honor, offer them your protection. They have done nothing wrong—only obeyed orders given to them by their King."

“Madame Elisabeth,” he replies, “your distress over their situation is now my own. I promise you, I will see that no harm comes to them between here and Paris.”

I bend my head and kiss his hand in gratitude. As I raise it, a sneering voice says, “How the mighty are fallen.” It is the deputy behind Barnave.

The Bible from such a mouth! It is offensive. But I do not reply, for I know my scripture better—my behavior does not demean me in the eyes of God.



*Marie-Antoinette via Wikimedia Commons*

Barnave climbs atop the carriage. In a loud, clear voice he reads out the decree of the Assembly. The looks of awe and respect make my heart ache. These are the sort of looks once given my grandfather and then my brother as king. Now they are offered to a bourgeoisie, protestant lawyer, while my brother is ridiculed.

As Barnave climbs down, the companion who insulted me says, “Two of you must ride in the carriage behind. Madame Elisabeth,” he points, “take your niece to the cabriolet.”

“No.”

He jerks back as if slapped. “What?”

“No, Monsieur.” I give him my most imperious look. I do not take orders from Assembly deputies and I will not leave my brother’s side at a time when he needs me. “We will not disembark. We are quite comfortable as we are.”

“Do you think the Assembly will continue to let you ride together, unchaperoned, plotting your little plots?”

My anger finally demands an outlet. “Let us? Sir, I am a princess of France, my brother is your King, we do nothing by your leave. We need no permission from your Assembly.”

Monsieur Barnave appeals to Louis, “It is for your safety, Majesty, that we would ride with you.”

“It pains me to doubt your words,” the King replies, “but they are sorely undercut by those of your companion.”

We sit and they stand in silence, glaring at each other. The

face of Barnave’s companion reddens. Suddenly he reaches past me for Marie-Thérèse.

“Do not touch my daughter.” The Queen’s voice is low but commanding. “Monsieur, we can sit here all evening if you like. I assure you we are not particularly eager to be in Paris.”

“Well, to Paris you will go! Do not complain to me, Madame Deficit, if you are crowded and uncomfortable on the way.” He wrenches open the door and unceremoniously plunks himself down between myself and Madame Tourzel, who snatches Marie-Thérèse onto her lap just in time to prevent my poor niece from being sat upon. As Monsieur Barnave climbs in displacing the Dauphin, the man with the vile mouth leans towards me until I can feel his breath. “You were just eager for my company, eh? An old maid, a princess no one would have.”

I give him my most withering look. “Monsieur, I have devoted my life to the service of God and the King, but even were it not so, you are the last man who would interest me.”

He gives a coarse laugh. “I do not believe that.”

A whip cracks and the horses start. I look at the carriage floor, the toe of one of my shoes peeks from beneath my skirt, its silk stained, doubtless from my mad search in the alleys of Varennes. The rose nearest its tip is partly gone—unraveled like our hopes.

Next to me, the loathsome deputy opens his knees, pressing his thigh into mine. When I give him a stern look he leers back. I glance across at Barnave to see if he has noticed. His expression is pained. This man was once President of the Assembly. I remember hearing him speak when the King’s presence was required, and the Queen and I followed Louis to the Salle du Manège to offer our support. Barnave spoke well. He cannot be unintelligent. He must then, I think, suffer from some ideological misapprehensions. Those seem to be a symptom of our current troubles—like a disease they infect even some of the strongest minds. Perhaps he can be made to see sense. I pull out my copy of Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

As I hoped, Barnave notices. “You read Burke, Madame Elisabeth?”

“Does it surprise you I am well read? At Montreuil, I have a library of more than two-thousand volumes, each one personally selected.”

“I wonder who paid for those,” the man beside me sneers.

“I did, Monsieur. And I consider the money very well spent.” I turn my attention back to Barnave. “Have you read it?”

He nods.

“I suspect you did not care for it, as Mr. Burke is convinced your revolution will end badly. He believes you do not take into account the complexities of man’s nature or of society.”

“If you concede that Burke is subject to error, perhaps his assessment of our movement reforming the governing of France is one.” Barnave tilts his head, challenging me.

“I do not believe so. You, monsieur, are intoxicated with the idea of liberty. Like a new father you think your baby all perfection and allow for no faults. Loving the concept to excess, you have considered only its advantages. You have not taken into account the disorders that will surely come in unchecked liberty’s wake. You enact too much change too fast. People’s nature cannot keep pace with it.”

“You mean your nature cannot,” the deputy beside me interjects.

“I have a very constant nature. It does not seek change merely for the sake of change. I will not condone what is new where what is new is wicked. And make no mistake, monsieurs, the way you treat His Majesty is wicked. As is the way you treat the Church and its faithful servitors. In a moment of hubris, the Assembly seems bent on upsetting an order that has made France great among nations for many centuries.”

“How pretty you look when your cheeks flush.” The man beside me lets his hand rest on my leg.

Barnave gives him a stern look.

“What? I am only having some fun.”

“We represent the Assembly. Our fellow deputies have faith that we will do so with dignity and honor. We are here to protect Madame Elisabeth, not to embarrass her—or ourselves.”

His defense of me is the final proof I need—Jacobin or no, Monsieur Barnave is not irredeemable. We must cultivate this man—I cast Antoinette a look—for Louis will need all the allies he can get when we arrive back in Paris. And we must be willing, I fear, to find them wherever we can.

The original version of the Sophie de Grouchy’s point of view was far more of a love triangle, which was dispensed with in favor of brevity, but here’s a heartbreaking discussion between would-be lovers...

“I suspect you do not care for it either, Madame Elisabeth, as Burke is no believer in a divine right of kings.” Barnave meets my eyes, clearly ready to engage in an intellectual debate.

“Everyone makes mistakes, Monsieur. Burke’s logic is not perfect. And perhaps England has a different sort of king. I do not know George III, so I cannot judge him. You, however,

know the king who sits beside you, and you are too intelligent, I think, not to appreciate his love for the French people and his genuine desire to make them happy.”

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*Madame Elisabeth via Wikimedia Commons*

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THE ORIGINAL VERSION OF THE SOPHIE DE GROUCHY'S POINT OF VIEW WAS FAR MORE OF A LOVE TRIANGLE, WHICH WAS DISPENSED WITH IN FAVOR OF BREVITY, BUT HERE'S A HEARTBREAKING DISCUSSION BETWEEN WOULD-BE LOVERS...

## REJECTED BY LAFAYETTE

By Stephanie Dray



*Marquis de Lafayette via Wikimedia Commons*

"If my parents have their way I won't remain unmarried much longer." I hadn't intend to say it; both because it felt demeaning to confess my fate was at the mercy of others, and because there was a note of hope in my voice that he might give me reason to refuse.

"Do they have any suitors in mind?" Lafayette asked.

I nodded. "But the only one I'm considering is the Marquis de Condorcet."

"Condorcet?" Lafayette laughed as if I were making a jest. Then, shamefacedly, turned his laugh into a cough when he realized I was serious.

"You disapprove?" I asked, wishing he would.

"I'd have no right to disapprove even if we spoke of a lesser man than Condorcet. I'm merely taken by surprise. He said nothing to me of this when he arrived in Versailles."

Now it was my turn for surprise. "He's here?"

Given the number of people who busied themselves at the palace, one might easily miss seeing an acquaintance in the crowds. But I might have expected to find him in the queen's chambers to watch the royals eat.

When I said as much, Lafayette shook his head. "Oh, he doesn't come to court to be seen. He only comes to work with the king's financial ministers to force the clergy and the nobles to pay taxes like everyone else..."

Yes, that did sound like him. But Condorcet knew that I had also come to Versailles, and he'd sent no word. I could think of no explanation for it. Meanwhile, Lafayette continued, "I had not thought Condorcet to be the marrying kind. Moreover, the two of you are so..."

I hung upon his trailing silence, nearly twitching for him to finish. "We are so what?"

"So different in age and temperament and certainly beauty. I'm having trouble imagining my friend wooing you with the flowers and poetry and love letters that are your due..."

I laughed at the absurd idea of Condorcet writing love letters, unless one counted his inflammatory pamphlet in defense of three innocent prisoners... and maybe that was a sort of love letter, now that I thought about it.

"If you consent to be Condorcet's bride, he'll be the envy of every man in France. He is, at least, of such merit as to deserve you, insofar as any man could."

Lafayette's words were well-intended and yet, painful. I couldn't bear to have the object of my true affections attempt to persuade me to accept another man's marriage proposal. I let my hand drop from his arm, turning to see if he felt for me what I felt for him. But he took it all in the wrong. "I begin to fear that I've done something to damage our friendship. Please allow me to make amends."

All my efforts to hide or bury my attraction had failed and my eyes fluttered closed in surrender. "You've done nothing, sir, for which you must make amends."

"Then why do you so often recoil from me, my dear lady?"

I opened my eyes and looked up at him then under tremulous lashes, my chest tight with yearning. "Because if I didn't recoil, I would offer my heart to you, and the rest of me too, body and soul."

His eyes widened. "Mon Dieu." He sought, and found, a marble bench upon which to sit. "I did not realize..." I ached with silent chagrin, when he finally said, "What an honor it would be to win you, Mademoiselle de Grouchy, and how jealous every man would be if you were mine. But I am married, you are not, and my dear, lovely, girl, you know the way of society..."

That he was a married man meant nothing; our society forced unconsenting children to take vows of marriage. How could any of us honor those vows? The hollowness of arranged marriages was evidenced everywhere, where scarcely a man in France did not keep a mistress.

But of course a woman could only honor the desires of her heart without censure if she had an accommodating husband. And I did not have one. “What if I didn’t care about the ways of society?”

Lafayette smiled with unbearable kindness. “Your father would care for your virtue and your brother too. Though I am a soldier, I do not wish to come to swords’ points with a man against whom I can in all conscience defend myself only halfway.”

Only halfway. So he did want me. He did feel something.



*Sophie de Condorcet via Wikimedia Commons*

That emboldened me to sit beside him.

But in the end, the only liberty he took was to brush a tendril of dark hair from my cheek where the breeze had blown it. And he sighed, with regret. “Can a decent man advise you to ruin your life? No. You’re too good to know how the scorpions of society ready their stingers for a woman who does not play by the rules. In an illicit arrangement, I’d have all the pleasure, and you’d have all the pain. I know this from guilty experience. So if you can be happy with Condorcet, you must feel no obligation to me that would prevent you from accepting his offer of marriage.”

It was a rejection; a gentle one. But a rejection nonetheless, and I felt it sharply. I knew that in the scheme of things the pain in my heart was inconsequential. Certainly it was nothing compared to the pain of the unjustly convicted peasants, or even my uncle, whose career lay in ruins. And yet, Lafayette’s gentle rejection kept cutting me, day after day. And instead of taking advantage of the many opportunities at court he provided me to see and be seen, I found myself, more and more, taking long walks away from the palace and its grounds.



*Palace of Versailles via Wikimedia Commons*



*The Storming of the Bastille via Wikimedia Commons*

# FUN & FUNNIER:

## INSIDE THE WRITING OF *RIBBONS of SCARLET*

SIX AUTHORS, WRITING FROM SIX LOCATIONS...FUN AND CRAZY WERE BOUND TO BE BY-PRODUCTS OF THE CREATION OF *RIBBONS OF SCARLET*! TEN FUNNY ANECDOTES FROM BEHIND THE SCENES...

1. We used a six-way Google chat window to trade questions, commentary, and research woes while writing...and titled it “The Scarlet Sisters.”
2. Six-way emails were signed “Liberte, egalite, sororite!” instead of “sincerely.” No irony was involved (at least some of the time).
3. We became eerily possessed by our historical characters: Sophie Perinot, writing our sole royalist POV, became prone to “In defense of the monarchy...” arguments as Kate Quinn (penning a moderate revolutionary) marshaled “The monarchy was doomed, but I cannot condone the permanent guillotine” rebuttals. Meanwhile Heather Webb and Eliza Knight (like their radical heroines) got bored of the arguing and simply marched on the battlements.
4. Everyone got hooked on Sofia Coppola Marie Antoinette Facebook GIFs.
5. Interactive Google docs were deployed to co-write all scenes where our heroines interacted: so, for example, when Louise Audu and Emilie de Sartine converse at a salon, that’s Heather Webb and Laura Kamoie writing their dialogue in real time! The same goes for all other interactions between our heroines.
6. Kate Quinn, Eliza Knight, and Stephanie Dray wrote their stories on a three-day retreat in Florida after a conference. Kate had the flu and wrote at arm’s length to avoid giving the others the plague. Steph sprayed her repeatedly with Lysol and somehow Kate is still on speaking terms with her.
7. Stephanie Dray suggested a six-way binge-watch of the Hulu show “Harlots”, which kicked off discussions on 18th century fashion, 18th century sexual mores, and the Bechdel Test in female-driven historical narratives.
8. Princess Elisabeth’s shoe obsession (historical fact alert) proved catching—and soon the Scarlet Sisters chat room became 40% historical shoe pics (thanks a lot, Sophie Perinot—is there a cure?). Now we are all buying red shoes by the dozen and you’ll have to come see us on tour to get a peek.
9. We bickered about historical choices, such as whether or not to call the red nemesis a scarf, a shawl, or a ribbon. Laura Kamoie stayed up until 5am performing a last fact check on our master document before handing it in to our long-suffering editor.
10. We round-robin-ed our copy-edits from author to author to make sure we didn’t end up with duplicate documents, resulting in successive Word docs called “Final RoS”; “Final Final RoS”; “I Swear This Is The Final RoS” and “FINAL Effing RoS.”



# Meet the Authors of *RIBBONS of SCARLET*



**Kate Quinn** is the New York Times and USA Today bestselling author of historical fiction. A native of southern California, she attended Boston University where she earned a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Classical Voice. She has written four novels in the Empress of Rome Saga, and two books in the Italian Renaissance, before turning to the 20th century with *The Alice Network* and *The Huntress*. All have been translated into multiple languages. Kate and her husband now live in San Diego with two rescue dogs.



**Stephanie Dray** is a New York Times, Wall Street Journal & USA Today bestselling author of historical women's fiction. Her award-winning work has been translated into eight languages and tops lists for the most anticipated reads of the year. Before she became a novelist, she was a lawyer and a teacher. Now she lives near the nation's capital with her husband, cats, and history books.



**Laura Kamoie** is the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and USA Today bestselling author of historical fiction. She holds a doctoral degree in early American history from The College of William and Mary, published two non-fiction books on early America, and most recently held the position of Associate Professor of History at the U.S. Naval Academy. Laura lives among the colonial charm of Annapolis, Maryland, with her husband and two daughters.



**Sophie Perinot** is an award-winning, multipublished author of female-centered historical fiction, who holds both a bachelor's in history and a law degree. With two previous books set in France—during the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries—Sophie's passion for French history began more than thirty years ago, when she first explored the storied châteaux of the Loire Valley. She lives in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area with her husband, children, and a small menagerie of pets.



**Heather Webb** is the award-winning and USA Today bestselling author of six historical novels set in France, including the recently released *Ribbons of Scarlet: A Novel of the French Revolution's Women*, *Rodin's Lover*, and *Meet Me in Monaco*, set to the backdrop of Grace Kelly's glamorous wedding on the French Riviera. To date, Heather's books have sold in over a dozen countries worldwide. She lives in New England with her family and one feisty bunny.



**E. Knight** is an award-winning and USA Today Bestselling author. Her love of history began as a young girl when she traipsed the halls of Versailles and ran through the fields in Southern France. She's known for her riveting, scandalous, rip-your-ear-out tales of historical fiction. Eliza lives in Maryland atop a small mountain with a knight, three princesses and a very naughty puppy.