

# **“A PLACE OF GREATER SAFETY”**

**A novel of the French revolution**

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**Adapted by John Collee**

**WORK IN PROGRESS**

## EPISODE 1. REVOLUTION

### 1. THE REBEL

Paris-educated Camille Desmoulins – scruffy and handsome – a tearaway since his teenage years, visits his father in Guise, Picardy. Father and son are both lawyers, but while the father is a pillar of provincial society, the son hates everything he stands for. Camille meets his father's client the Prince de Condé and boldly declares the prince a tyrant and a parasite. The self-destructive outburst, miraculously goes unpunished. Conde has a crisis in Versailles to deal with.

### 2. TAXATION AND STARVATION

King Louis XVI, out hunting in the forest, encounters a peasant carrying a body for burial. France is burdened by debt, crops are failing, the price of bread is rising. Unrest is spreading from the country to the cities.

### 3. DANTON MEETS CAMILLE

Another provincial lawyer Georges-Jacques DANTON works as a barrister in Paris, where rural poverty is forcing hundreds into the city.

Crime is rife and hygiene is poor, the bars are packed, morals are lax. Danton has a big personality, the build and face of a prizefighter. He fits right in.

After Danton loses a court-case to Camille Desmoulins, they become sparring partners and friends. Revolution and sex are their twin passions.

In sexual matters, Danton is being driven into debt by the mother of his illegitimate first child.. Meanwhile he's falling in love with Gabrielle, daughter of his Italian landlord..

Camille is obsessed with an older woman – Annette Duplessis, wife of the chief civil servant at the treasury. Her attractive, precocious teenage daughter Lucile is in love with Camille.

### 4. POLITICAL CRISIS IN VERSAILLES

King Louis XVI is intelligent but impotent, devoted to hunting and eating. When he can't hunt he amuses himself shooting cats from the battlements of Versailles. His foreign queen, the Austrian Marie Antoinette is unpopular with the people, pretty and strong willed, with a taste for diamonds.

The Marquis de LAFAYETTE, in the Assembly of the Notables thinks the Estates-General should be called to resolve the current financial crisis. The Estates consists of three chambers – one for the clergy, one for the nobles and one for the commoners who are always outnumbered by the other two “estates”. The system is therefore patently unjust – ripe for reform.

The indecisive king lives by the maxim that if you don’t make decisions you avoid making mistakes, but Lafayette is a leader of men; a general famous for his battles in America and France and has brought back revolutionary ideas from America.

Loyal to the Crown, devoted to maintaining order, he nonetheless yearns for reform.

## 5. THE CLIMATE OF REVOLT

Camille’s “affair” with a married woman - Annette - is public knowledge, even though Annette refuses to consummate it. For Camille it’s the worst of both worlds, so, figuring it will keep him close to Annette, Camille declares his love for Annette’s pretty daughter Lucile.

Annette’s and her husband Claude are outraged, but Lucille starts a determined revolt against her parents with the aim of marrying Camille – a domestic revolt which mirrors the larger political turmoil in Paris..

At the Café du Foy, behind the Comedie Francais, Danton and Camille run into Fabre – Danton’s one-time speaking-coach and travelling actor from Troyes. The Paris coterie of misfits and theatre folk are now under police surveillance.



## 6. INADEQUATE REFORM

The genius financier Necker is recalled to try and restore the Treasury. He borrows from abroad, bread prices rise and Parisians riot. The King's troops quell the fighting but Louis is almost out of money to pay the army.

Riots frequently occur on the streets. Camille wades in and gets injured, and Danton and Gabrielle – now Danton's wife - nurse him with tedious regularity.

## 7. DUKE OF ORLEANS PRETENDER TO THE THRONE

In this cauldron of discontent comes Philippe, Duke of Orléans – 40 years old, cousin to the King and said to be the richest man in Europe. He sees himself as man of the people, and a legitimate claimant for the throne.

In deliberate contrast to the king He holds court in the centre of Paris - not hidden out at Versailles like Louis XVI

In Versailles, Realising he has to take charge or lose control, the King takes an unusual step and secretly hires left-wing sympathiser Danton as a counsellor. He also fixes a date for the first meeting of the Estates General for 1<sup>st</sup> May 1789.

## 8. WINTER OF DISCONTENT

Now a cruel winter increases pressure on the poor. It's January 1789 the Seine freezes over and vagrants die under bridges. And the price of bread rises and rises.

The opportunistic Duke of Orleans makes overtures to Camille, whom he sees as a future leader. He also sells his magnificent art collection and donates the proceeds to the poor of Paris to buy bread.

## 9. TENSION MOUNTS

With the balance of power shifting, the agitators become more outspoken and the threats against them more explicit.

When Camille is taken aside by men working for the Duke de Mirabeau he fears the worst. But Mirabeau, like Orleans wants to recruit him as an agitator and pamphleteer.

Everyone is jostling now for seat on the assembly

Soft-spoken Maximilien de Robespierre moves to the city and hooks up with his former school-friend Camille, having been elected to represent his home town.

## 10. DEATH AND DISORDER

With the spring thaw, Danton's baby son with Gabrielle dies tragically. Danton and Gabrielle are heartbroken. Their house is now constantly full of revolutionary conspirators, giving them little time to grieve.

They meet the pretty, witty Lucile who continues to defy her parents, angling for marriage to Camille. Danton is secretly attracted to her

Meanwhile, in the streets, Fashionable carriages en route to the race-meeting at Vincennes are forced to part with money to be allowed through, but the Duke d'Orléans is cheered and allowed to pass.

More jostling. At Orlean's behest a riot trashes the house of a political rival. Mob rule and fighting breaks out against the King's Guards. Three hundred corpses are shovelled off the streets.

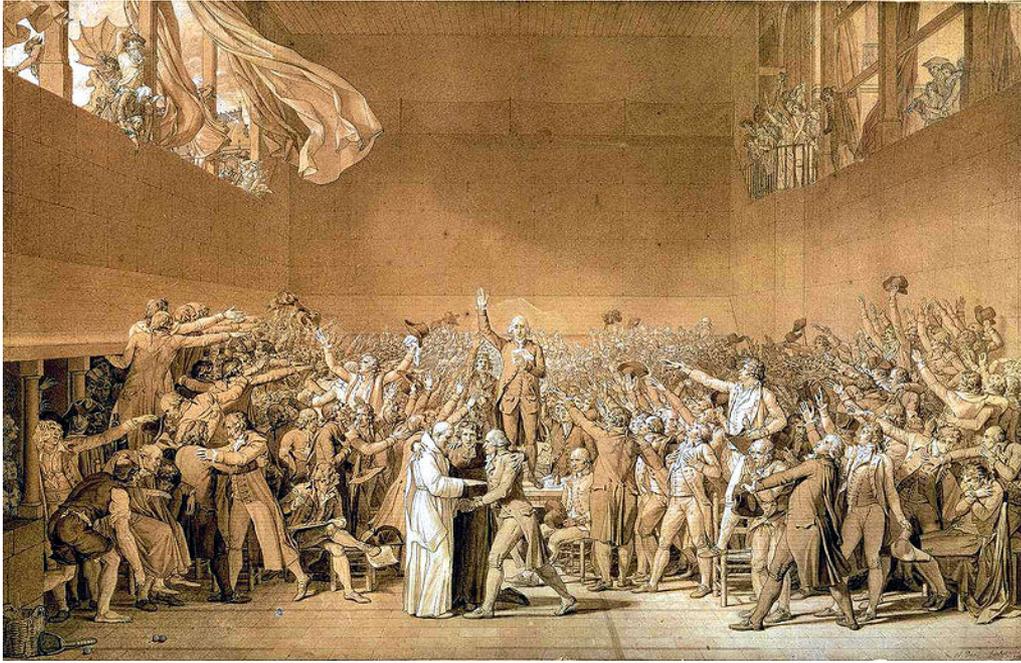
## 11. MEETING OF THE ESTATES GENERAL FAILS

The Estates General finally sits at Versailles, with Mirabeau and d'Orléans among the commons. Lafayette, America's hero is there. All in the presence of the King and Queen.

The experiment in democracy ends in stalemate. As usual, the nobility and clergy vote against the commons. Robespierre wants to invite the Clergy to join the commons, but he needs someone famous to align with his cause. Mirabeau tries to manipulate him (as he manipulates Camille) but Robespierre – surprisingly - is made of stronger stuff.

Some clergy members come over to the commons who rename themselves the National Assembly. The balance of power shifts. The King annuls their actions and locks them out of the meeting hall in Versailles. Outrage! Mirabeau declares they will only leave at bayonet point

The commoners representatives congregate in a nearby indoor tennis court where they take a near-unanimous oath "not to separate, and to reassemble wherever circumstances require, until the constitution of the kingdom is established"



## 12. CAMILLE'S MOMENT OF TRUTH

Camille has always argued that violent revolution is the only way they'll break the deadlock between the Assembly and the King. His vehemence unsettles Robespierre who is afraid of civil disorder.

The Marquis de Sade, in prison in the Bastille, is shouting from the exercise tower that prisoners are being murdered and that people should come to their aid.

When Necker – the financial reformer - is dismissed, public outrage boils over.

Camille, at the Café du Foy is propelled outside to speak. “To arms”, shout the crowd, thrusting two pistols in his hands. Camille, surprised, frightened but determined, overcomes his customary stutter and rallies the people with words of revolution.

Fighting breaks out in earnest.

## 13. STORMING THE BASTILLE

Hunting for arms and ammunition, they raid the barracks at Les Invalides, and then converge on the Bastille. Camille is not present but many people believe they saw him there. Dangerously he is now commonly identified as a leader of the mob.

At the Bastille, De Launay, the governor of the Bastille is taken, dragged into the gutter and stabbed. One man in the crowd severs his head. Nights of rioting ensue. It's begun.



## EPISODE 2 – THE THREE PRETENDERS

### 1. LEADERSHIP

With the king's grip on power increasingly uncertain, The Duke de Orleans – funded partly by British agents - continues to consolidate his power base. His man, Laclos (Author of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*) goes about paying secret funds to various agitators.

Camille laughs when Laclos suggest buying the incorruptible Robespierre (to the service of Orleans) and suggests Danton instead. Danton is popular articulate and forceful – a man of large appetites and open to bribery. But Orleans knows Danton is already taking fees from the King.

Danton now calls himself Captain Danton of the Cordeliers Battalion of the citizens' militia. In truth no-one is in charge of the Paris Commune (Town Hall) but General Lafayette is pressed into service, desperate to maintain order.

### 2. EVERYTHING CHANGES, EVERYTHING STAYS THE SAME

A Mayor of Paris is found, The King is presented with the nation's new tricolour cockade; the monarch's white alongside the revolutionary red and blue.

The *ancien regime* is clearly in retreat. Nobles are leaving the country, police and soldiers are defecting.

Camille is now famous as a pamphleteer and rabble-rouser. This puts him at risk from conservative Royalist elements. In the increasingly lawless city, lootings lynchings and score-settling are common. Camille moves near to Danton in the Cordeliers district on the left bank for safety.

Summer drags on. The heat becomes stifling. Members of the assembly wrangle over the King's waning power – his right to veto laws made by the National Assembly. Compromises are reached, no one is happy. The Bastille may have fallen, but the courtiers at Versailles are still relaxing and banqueting while the poor of Paris still starve.

### 3. THE MOB BRNG THE ROYAL FAMILY TO PARIS

Exasperated, Danton exhorts people to bring the King to Paris. Accordingly – a mob of women head to Versailles to arrest and protect the King. Lafayette reluctantly goes with them, taking his troops to maintain order on both sides.



At dawn the mob are in the palace and attacking the bodyguards. Lafayette takes charge and bravely forces the Royals to address the baying crowds from a balcony.

The Assembly follow the King to Paris and headquarter in a cramped indoor riding-school.

#### 4. RISE OF THE FACTIONS

The middle class are clearly shifting sides now. Claude Duplessis allows his daughter Lucile to host a party for the Revolutionaries.

Camille, Danton and Robespierre attend the party. Camille talks of the newspaper he has launched. Everyone wants to know when the constitution will be written and the promised New Order can begin. Lucile is angry with her parents, impatient to marry Camille.

Her mother Annette finally lets go of her resentment of her daughter. The two of them laugh and cry together. Her sister Adele starts a tentative relationship with Robespierre – a strange cold fish with little experience of women.

There is still no acknowledged leader of the new regime. Lafayette, Mirabeau and the Duke d'Orléans are plotting against each other. Others are splitting into factions. Intolerance is growing between the factions

#### 5. ARRIVAL OF ST JUST

In 1790, Danton's wife Gabrielle gives birth to another baby son and a fellow called St Just appears in town – tall, young, self-possessed and handsome, a published poet and a friend of Robespierre. He flirts with Lucile and talks back to Camille who takes an instant dislike to him.

Lucille's father finally gives in to his daughter's moods and allows her to marry Camille. The priest at Saint Sulpice refuses to conduct the ceremony until Camille agrees to stop denouncing the church in his weekly newspaper.

With Robespierre's intervention, the wedding finally takes place. The Robespierre announces he has no interest in Adele. Adele is not exactly heartbroken.

## 6. THREATS FROM OUTSIDE FRANCE AND WITHIN

Meanwhile now, the country is rife with rumours of invasion by foreign powers fearful of the anti-royalist movement.

Lafayette guards the King and Queen closely at their court in the Tuileries, adjacent to the Louvre. The King exasperates all – including his Austrian wife Marie Antoinette - by his failure to show any backbone. Her brother is threatening to invade France and put things to rights.

Lucille and Camille's new home is turning into a newspaper office - chaotic and crowded, just like the Danton's next door. Lucille is happy but worried Camille will be killed 'when the Austrians invade'.

Everyone thinks the National Assembly has outlived its usefulness.

Mirabeau dies, his supporters mutter of poisoning.



## 7. LAFAYETTE FAILS TO EVACUATE THE ROYAL FAMILY

Lafayette can see the writing on the wall for the monarchy and secretly aids the King to plan his escape

The king attempts to leave. Furious, Danton's Cordeliers surround the coach containing the royal family. After almost two hours of tense sitting and listening to the jeers, the King and Queen retreat back into the gilded cage which the Tuileries has now become.

Danton has bested Lafayette – another significant power shift. There is talk of the Duke of Orléans taking the throne, but on the advice of his mistress Orleans declares himself uninterested in becoming regent, nervous that he's a pawn in Danton schemes and that a royalist restoration could quickly make him a target.

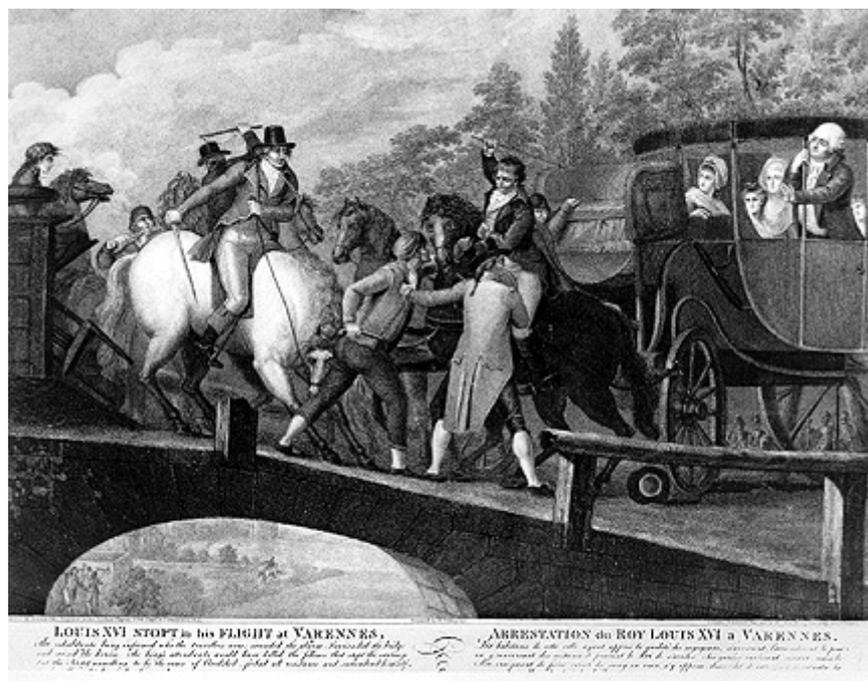
So Lafayette and Orleans both seem to be on the wane. The King is trapped and Danton is the real man of the people.

## 8. THE KING'S OWN ESCAPE ATTEMPT IS FOILED

Finally pushed into action, the King makes his own clumsy attempt to save himself and his family .

Their coach is stopped en route to the border at Varennes.

The Royals return in shame. Vast crowds line the route and the National Guard present their arms with the butts reversed as if it were a funeral procession... as indeed it may prove to be.



## 9. THE PETITION

Danton's Cordeliers denounce the King as a coward who has relinquished all right to rule, even as a constitutional monarch.

They start pushing for an outright Republic and prepare a petition to be signed by the people on the Champ de Mars, (Where the Eiffel Tower now stands) during planned celebrations for the fall of the Bastille.

Danton plots with Camille that, if the national Assembly resist them, they will incite the mob to invade the Riding School.

## 10. THE MASSACRE ON THE CHAMP DE MARS

They've made a serious miscalculation in that spies are reporting their plans to the opposition Constitutional monarchists still dominate the Assembly and Lafayette still commands the National Guard

As the mob gathers in the Champ de Mars, Lafayette mobilises the National Guard to impose the will of the National Assembly.

When elements of the mob react to this show of force, the National Guard fire on the crowd, and promptly but blame the Cordeliers for fomenting anarchy.

## 11. DANTON AND CAMILLE FORCED TO FLEE

Now denounced for plotting against the Assembly, and hunted by revolutionary soldiers of the National Guard The Cordeliers scatter. Danton and Camille regroup at the country home of Gabrielle's parents

Robespierre is caught, and calmly waits an execution by ruffians in the Paris street. He is saved, by a feral gang of anti-royalist women who declare him *King Robespierre* and spirit him away to safety behind high locked doors.

Camille declares he will go back to the fray and find his friend Robespierre and make sure Lucile is safe. Danton thinks they should leave the country for a while Camille is outraged that Danton wants them all to run away. He accepts that Lucile must be taken somewhere safe, but the last person he'd trust to look after her is Danton.

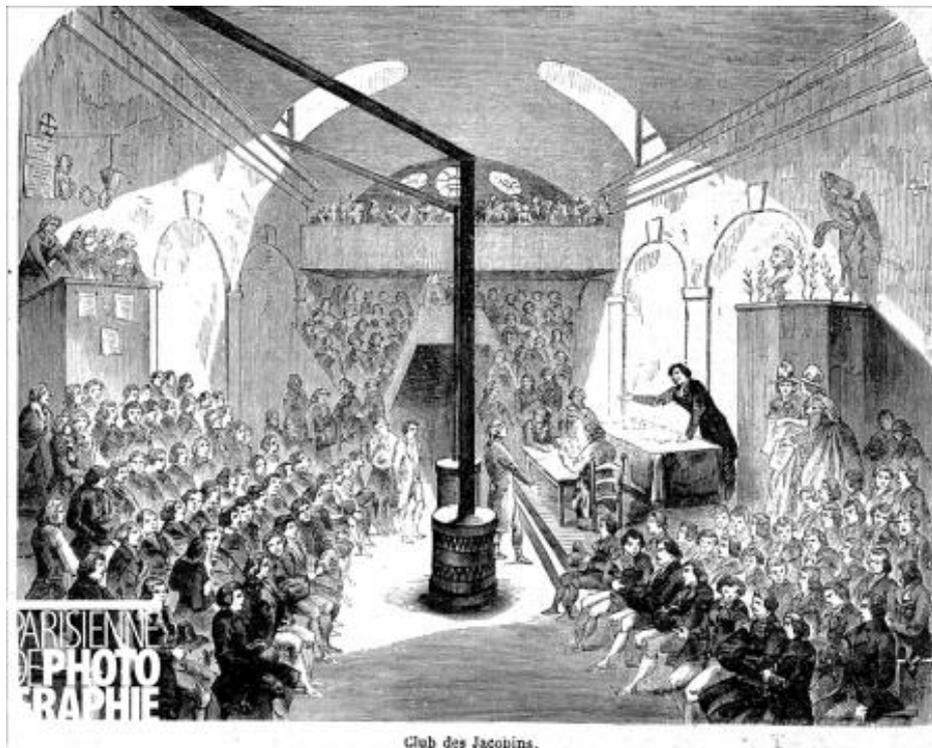
## EPISODE 3 - CRY HAVOC

### 1. A MONARCHY, BUT NOT AS WE KNEW IT

Louis swears to uphold the new constitution as a Constitutional monarch but many say that, in trying to flee the country he has proven himself unworthy of a such a role.

General Lafayette, censured for the Champs de Mars killings, is banished to a provincial post. He waits his time to return, allied now to the King.

In Paris, the relatively inconspicuous Robespierre lives simply with the Duplay family, monk-like and incorruptible. He is rebuilding his factional HQ - the Jacobin Club – as a place for debate and working hard on the new reforms.



### 2. RETURN TO PARIS OF DANTON AND CAMILLE DESMOULINS

Danton comes back from exile. He stands for election as First Deputy Public Prosecutor, and wins. Camille is allowed back to the Bar.

Jacques Brissot, A republican-turned-royalist like Lafayette, is powerful in the National Assembly. His faction want a war with foreign powers, believing that defeat will undermine the Republicans and send people running back to the safety and security of the Monarchy.

Lucile, now in the bloom of pregnancy, enjoys a dangerous, passionate relationship with Camille based on mutual sexual jealousy. Camille visits prostitutes, Lucile fans rumours of affairs and half jokes that the child she is carrying is Danton's.

### **3. THE ASSEMBLY MANIPULATE THE MOB**

The Austrians are still threatening to invade. Lafayette himself is threatening to March on Paris.

The National Assembly dictate terms to the King who rejects their power over him and dismisses the ministry.

In the response the National Guard put down their weapons and allow a mob to enter the Tuileries. All day, armed "Patriots" rant against the King and Queen, but don't attack.

The whole thing seems slightly stage-managed – a tactic by the Assembly to impose their will on the King. Danton is furious that the mob didn't take matters into their own hands. Camille is furious with Danton for not seizing the moment "I thought you were going to adopt the tactics of a bull" "I am but only when I'm ready. "You don't hear bulls saying: When I'm ready"

### **4. CAMILLE BECOMES A FATHER**

In the midst of this crisis, Camille's wife Lucile goes into labour.

Suddenly the dangerous game-playing of their relationship seems stupid and irrelevant. Camille is suddenly fearful for her, mad for her, anxious she will die.

He goes to see Robespierre, his oldest friend, living at the Duplay household, but the workaholic Robespierre has no time to spare. During Camille's visit, the youngest of the Duplay girls tries to seduce him, threatening to accuse him of rape if he refuses.

The situation is defused by news the Lucile has given birth.

### **5. DANTON AND CAMILLE GAMBLE ALL OR NOTHING**

Impatient for power The Duke of Orléans suggests overthrowing King Louis on the 14<sup>th</sup> July – the next bastille anniversary. Danton and Camille agree. Its time to risk everything and act against the remaining Royalists.

10<sup>th</sup> July, a state of emergency is declared. Danton and Camille give rousing speeches and are applauded on the steps of City Hall. It is a far cry from a year earlier when they were on the run.

Plans are laid for a proper assault on the Kings stronghold – the Tuileries. A week before the date Danton goes to the country – then returns – Camille thought he'd run off again

In Camille's apartment, firearms are stacked on the floor. Gabrielle, herself pregnant again, is terrified of the coming violence.

Lucile begs Danton to protect Camille in the fight ahead. She stops short of promising herself to Danton as a bribe. The truth is that Lucile loves her husband as fiercely as he loves her, if he dies she'd want to die also

## 6. THE ATTACK ON THE TUILERIES

The King and Queen at the Tuileries try to continue as before. The king goes through his normal bedtime ritual assisted by a gaggle of noblemen. The Royal family thinks they have the Swiss guard to protect them, but Danton leans on the mayor of Paris to restrict the palace from access to ammunition.



On the 10<sup>th</sup> Aug 1792, armed patriots – one group led by the led by the female singer Theroigne - line up behind cannons to attack the palace.



Danton controls operations from City Hall, Robespierre lies low with the Duplays, out of harms way.

As the mob attack, Danton agrees for the King and royal family to leave the palace and take refuge at the National Assembly. The mob attacking the palace take out their murderous fury on the Swiss Guard.

## 7. THE KING FACES JUDGEMENT

Afterwards Danton declares victory for the public.

The Assembly debate the future of the monarchy while the royal family, their children and supporters are squashed together in a reporter's box, then moved to a draughty stone building known as the Temple.

In hurried discussions it is agreed the Assembly must be dissolved and new elections called. The institution of the monarchy is gone. Finally the republicans have their republic

## 8. THE NEW ORDER

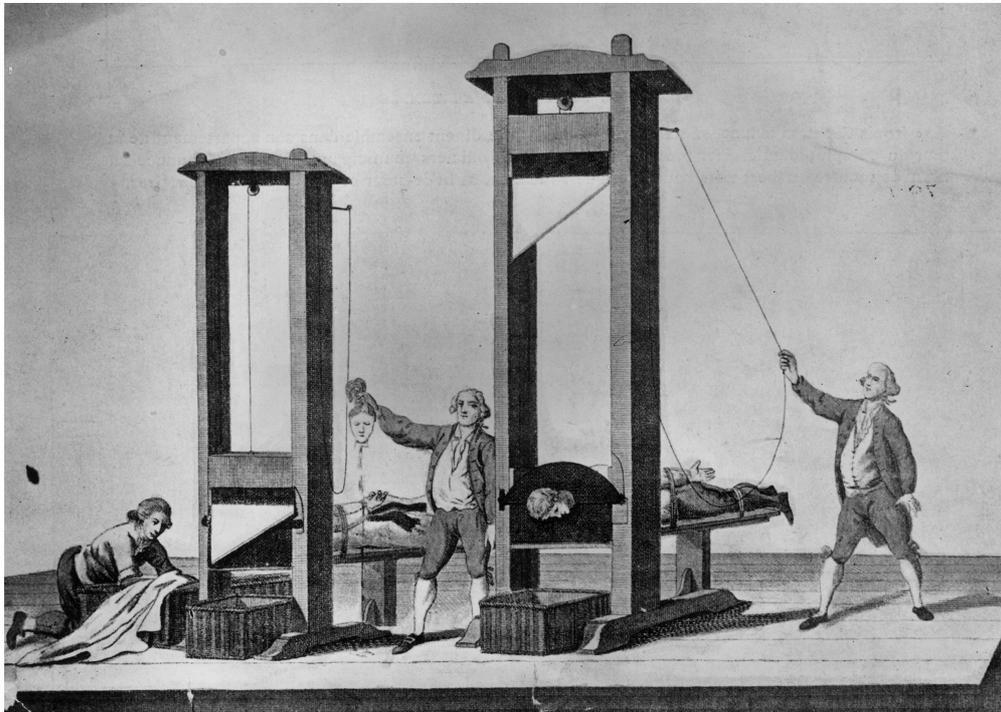
Spoils are divided, debts paid, favours granted. Danton is elected Minister for Justice and Camille is to be his Secretary. They will live in a palace.

Camille's estranged father has spent years contributing to a massive encyclopaedia of law. Its wryly amusing to Camille that much of that work was in vain – many laws will be different

Robespierre declines Danton's request to join the new administration. Even in victory, He wishes to stand apart to advise, partly because all official positions are so fraught with compromise.

New laws demand that former nobles must face the same sentences for equivalent crimes as ordinary citizens. Many nobles are judged to have robbed and killed in defence of their wealth and many are in the Bastille. Are they to be judged or pardoned. If judged and found guilty are they to be executed en masse? Does the time required to deal with all these hundreds of cases not make a mockery of the new legal system.

As the new rulers consider this dilemma a public health expert called Dr Guillotin demonstrates a modern and efficient mode of execution. It's certainly quick, and democratic, and relatively painless.



## EPISODE 4 - THE KING MUST DIE

### 1. THE EXTERNAL THREAT

France is now a Republic. Everything starts changing – the street signs, the modes of dress. The mob - the “sans culottes” - favour red hat and loose trousers (as opposed to the breeches worn by gentlemen). Dressing in the old style can get you beaten up as can a middle-class name, which is why “d’Anton” is now Danton and “de Robespierre” is now plain citizen Robespierre.

Brissot’s conservative, provincial faction continue to argue the king should be spared, if only to be held captive as a bargaining chip against foreign invasion.

Invasion remains a serious danger: The Duke of Brunswick commanding the Austro Prussian army has published a manifesto, promising the overthrow of Paris, death destruction and reprisals unless the Revolutionaries capitulate.

### 2. THE ENEMY WITHIN

Paranoia grips the city. What if the Aristocrats break from their makeshift prisons and re-arm their followers? There are currently 2,000 political opponents under arrest. When you’ve won the fight, a political opponent is a sort of criminal, guilty of crimes against the state.

Robespierre has always abjured violence but he’s a pragmatist and a disciple of Rousseau. “In Revolution the old presumptions do not hold good ...we have to identify (our enemies) and take them on”.

Danton is Minister for Justice. Camille and Fabre are his secretaries. They have breakfast together, gossiping with their womenfolk about rumours and sexual intrigues. Meanwhile, Brissot’s supporters flood in from the provinces. They are numerous and passionate, singing in the streets, demanding the overthrow of the Cordeliers: Danton, Camille, Robespierre and Marat.

### 3. “ALWAYS DARE”

Still the Prussians advance. Verdun falls on 1<sup>st</sup> September. If the Austrians choose now to advance on Paris, they are two days’ march away.

Danton refuses to flee. He rises to the occasion, inspiring The National Convention with his belligerent rhetoric “Dare, always dare and again dare. In this way you will save France”

#### 4. THE SEPTEMBER MASSACRES

As trenches are dug outside the city walls, Camille steels himself to deal with the internal threat. Surrounded by the portraits of former justice ministers, he goes through the list of accused – mostly former aristos - arbitrarily deciding who to pardon, who should be tried.

A system of kangaroo courts is instituted by quickly breaks down and wholesale slaughter ensues. In what become notorious as the September Massacres. Innocent prisoners are executed. Guilty ones are mistakenly set free. The Princess de Lamballe is murdered and decapitated.

What really gets Danton angry is Robespierre's covert attempt to have Brissot and his minister Roland executed for complicity. It's alright to execute aristos but he draws the line at killing politicians – God knows where that would lead.

Danton's wife Gabrielle is disgusted by the acts of killing. She thinks Danton has consigned both their souls to damnation. Danton seeks out Camille, but finds only Lucile. He takes his mind off the betrayal by his usual flirting. By morning 1400 prisoners are dead.

Camille will always be blamed for this: his opponents calling him a bloody "Septembrist" when they wish to implicate him in the murders.

#### 5. DANTON PLANS TO STEAL THE CROWN JEWELS

To deal with the external threat, Danton summons his old friend Fabre. He wants him to steal the Crown Jewels and buy off the Duke of Brunswick.

Fabre is appalled but Danton replies: "I am a filthy patriot and I'll save this country any way I can. And for god sake don't tell Camille. He'll tell Robespierre and Robespierre will call us traitors."

Maximilien Robespierre is living with the large family of a master-carpenter called Duplay. The whole family idolises 'Max'. Their eldest daughter Eleonore strips off and lies on his bed to initiate an affair with 'the incorruptible'. It's an awkward coupling, driven in part by Robespierre's odd sense of obligation.

Meanwhile the crown jewels go missing and Brunswick duly is defeated at the battle of Valmy. Everyone calls it a victory for the army of the revolution. The city is delirious with relief and joy.

#### 6. ELECTIONS

Elections take place for the 'National Convention' – as the Assembly has been renamed.

Danton is returned with a 91 per cent poll. Robespierre is elected along with his brother Augustin and the brilliant, narcissistic 25 year old ideologue Louis de St Just. Camille doesn't get enough votes but Robespierre, his old school friend, arranges things so that Camille wins.

Even the Duke of Orléans wins a seat (and retitles himself Philippe Égalité).

Fearing the rise of Danton and the Cordeliers, Jacques Brissot launches a verbal attack on Robespierre who seizes the rostrum, destroying Brissot with a speech which simultaneously raises Robespierre's status within the Cordeliers.

The left wing Cordeliers remain a minority but Robespierre now fully controls their main forum - the Jacobin club. Though Robespierre denies it and Danton chooses not to see it, a Robespierre/ St Just faction is beginning to slowly eclipse Camille and Danton in political influence.

## 7. THE WAR OF RUMOURS

In the struggle for political power within and between factions, no territory is sacred. Family feuds, infidelities and gossip are being exploited as political ammunition. Rumours abound. Camille has a reputation for bisexuality, gambling and whoring. "Stay at home," Robespierre tells him "keep your wife with you; (your) way of living is a reproach to our ideals."

Camille and Danton give up their palatial residences in the Marais and move back to their former homes on the left bank. Even the appearance of corruption and privilege is dangerous.

Danton is a man of action and grand gestures. He detests infighting and politicking, pretending to Gabrielle they will retire to a simpler life in the country. "In the country we are going to be ordinary people again." But Gabrielle knows the trap of power has him firmly gripped.

Camille plots tactics with Marat – doctor and journalist - an extreme left-winger. Brissot's faction will keep harassing them as long as the king lives. Robespierre puts the left wing view at the Convention: "Louis must die so the nation can breathe." He proposes a vote knowing that Danton's robust popular oratory, Camille's and Marat's pamphlets plus Robespierre's background scheming will carry the day.

## 8. BLACKMAIL

Danton skips off to Belgium to confer with the army chief Dumoriez who's loyalties, tactics and motivation are in doubt. Rumours persist that Danton is taking money from royalists of every stripe, including the hated English.

When he returns there's a letter from an exiled aristocrat in London blackmailing him. "Release the king, or we tell that you have been in the pay of the British and of King Louis himself."

In a fury Danton accidentally strikes his wife Gabrielle, knocking her to the ground, then is overcome with remorse

Regarding the blackmail, he explains to Camille that he cannot win either way. Vote in the King's defence at the Convention and everyone will know he's been bribed. Vote for execution and the blackmailers will expose his dealings with Louis and with England.

## 9. PROBLEM SOLVED

It's the Autumn of 1792. As the King and the royal family languish under arrest, Danton visits the President of the National Convention and see if the papers have really been sent to expose him.

The President knows of Danton's treachery. He has the papers. But he agrees – for a price – to part with them.

Danton returns home late, triumphant. He burns the papers but the sordid event has somehow diminished him - certainly in the eyes of Gabrielle - his moral compass and the mother of his children.

She explains to Camille: He thinks “people may call me corrupt but I'm my own man. I'm just playing the system.” The problem is he's forgotten what he wanted. The means have become the end. He's corrupt through and through.

## 10. THE TRIAL OF LOUIS XVI

The King's trial is, in some way, a trial of the moral precepts of the Revolution itself. St Just argues forcibly that the king must die. His guilt – he argues – stems from merely being the king – that kind of power makes crimes against humanity almost inevitable. “No-one can rule innocently”

His opponent Michelet argues presciently: "If we accept the proposition that one person can be sacrificed for the happiness of the many, it will soon be demonstrated that two or three or more could also be sacrificed for the happiness of the many. Little by little, we will find reasons for sacrificing the many for the happiness of the many, and we will think it was a bargain."

## 11. THE INDICTMENT

The Convention votes . Given the overwhelming evidence of Louis's collusion with the invaders (His wife passed military secrets to the Austrians) , the verdict is a foregone conclusion – with 693 deputies voting guilty of treason, none for acquittal, 23 abstaining.

When it comes to sentencing 288 of the Deputies vote for imprisonment or exile. 72 of the Deputies voted for a delayed or suspended death penalty. 361 of the Deputies – a slim majority - vote for Louis's immediate death.



## 11. EXECUTION OF LOUIS XVI

A last minute motion to reprieve is voted down and , on a bitterly cold day - 21 January 1793, Louis is taken to the Place de la Revolution to face the guillotine.

He delivers a short speech ("I pardon those who are the cause of my misfortunes....") He declaring himself willing to die and that the good people of France will be spared a similar fate.

A general halts the speech by ordering a drum roll. The former King is then quickly beheaded.

As Louis's blood drips to the ground many members of the crowd run forward to dip their handkerchiefs in it. The King may be dead but the idea persists that some mythical being has been sacrificed and there will be a heavy price to pay.

## EPISODE 5 - CONSPIRATORS

### 1. WAR

February 1793. The execution of the king has plunged France into war with England, Holland and Spain. It's the external war Jacques Brissot wanted but not on so many fronts. The only bright spot for Brissot is that he's able to blame the Cordeliers for precipitating the catastrophe.

At home there are food shortages, soaring inflation and riots in the provinces. How much longer can the Revolution survive?

Danton leaves his pregnant wife and goes to Belgium once again put pressure on General Demouriez – a former Royalist whom he strongly suspects of wanting to lose the war.

### 2. DEATH OF GABRIELLE

At Danton's house Gabrielle goes into labour and dies in childbirth. Lucille and Camille Desmoulins implore the doctors to do what they can to save her. All to no avail.

Deeply affected by the death is Louise Gely a teenage girl who lived upstairs and has promised Gabrielle to care for her children.

Danton returns from diplomacy (and whoring) in Belgium to find his wife already buried. He reads Gabrielle's journal, feels stricken with remorse, vows to be a better man.

### 3. THE DESCENT TO CHAOS

The French army suffers defeat in Holland, civil war breaks out in the Vendée – a province on the mid-West coast of France. In Paris mobs loot shops and smash printing presses.

Danton faces the Convention, demanding more troops for the army. As for the internal disruption - there must be a new court, a Revolutionary Tribunal, to deal quickly and decisively with "Enemies of the Republic" who are trying to destroy the regime from within.

The speech is loudly applauded. Robespierre congratulates Danton with heartfelt sincerity and hard men like police chief Joseph Fouche are dispatched with soldiers to put down the revolt in the provinces.

Louise Gely turns down an offer of marriage from an eminently suitable young man, saying she swore to look after Danton's kids. Her devout, Royalist parents think she's crazy.

In Danton's company she's capable spirited and feisty. She has his measure, and his children are already attached to her. She's 15 he's 33. Danton is enchanted by her.

#### **4. TREACHERY OF DEMOURIEZ**

Back in Belgium, Danton threatens General Demouriez one final time, warning that the Revolutionary Tribunal will not distinguish between military failure and treason.

Demouriez thinks the revolution cannot survive. He claims that Brissot has approached him to turn against the revolutionaries and put the King's son – the Dauphin - on the throne with the Duke of Orléans as regent. He asks Danton to join them.

Danton gets the names of Demouriez's co-conspirators and heads back to Paris. He arrives home in secret, calculating the damage of releasing this information – if France's highest ranking general and the opposition leader and their ally Orleans of a whole political faction are accused of treason they must be killed. Can the government withstand such bloodletting? Will Danton himself be implicated?

Danton broods. Louise Gely shelters him. Camille seeks him out. Together they agree the Convention must be told.

#### **5. DANTON SPEAKS OF THE CONSPIRACY**

Danton addresses the Convention, tells them of Demouriez and the plot with Orleans and Brissot. Brissot hotly denies the charges and The Convention descends into chaos. Punches are thrown. There are counter accusations against Danton for lying.

The radical Marat wants to see Orléans indicted for treason. He proposes they abolish the deputies' immunity from prosecution. Danton and Camille are obliged to support the dangerous motion.

Along with Orleans, army officers who supported the plot are arrested. Brissot escapes and goes on the run, but now the purge begins.

#### **6. THE PURGE**

A new politico-legal instrument – the Tribunal sits in judgement on the Army officers who went over to the other side.

Danton departs from the Committee of Public Safety,

Robespierre replaces him, having hitherto refused positions of influence. Now his ruthlessness and his administrative skills are required. St Just is Robespierre's right hand man. The supposedly impartial jury of ordinary citizens is stacked with Robespierre supporters – his doctor Souberbielle, his landlord Duplay...

The Public Prosecutor, Fouquier is Camille's cousin.

Danton watches out the window as the guillotine is put to work – witnessing its horrifying speed and effectiveness - wondering what they've started.

## 7. DEATH OF MARAT

Almost as a homage to Gabrielle, Danton marries Louise Gely having first acquired a sort of absolution for his sins from an accommodating priest.

His friends can't understand what he sees in the girl but it's obvious – she reminds him of his better self.

## 8. TOULON FALLS

Foreign powers still threaten on all sides. The people of Toulon hand their city and their navy over to the British.

With the talk of betrayal and treason, the town is becoming dangerous for politicians of every stripe. Marat, the most outspoken of the Cordeliers is regarded by the Brissotins as the devil incarnate.

Camille is followed in the street by armed men. He discovers it is two soldiers delegated to protect him from assassins.

Camille in turn has fantasises about killing the self-righteous St Just; but it's Marat who is murdered – in his bath, by a pretty girl from the country indoctrinated with the politics of the right.

Camille presides at her trial and is struck by her passionate dedication to an ideal – Like Louise with Danton, she reminds him of himself ....once

## 9. THE TERROR

Robespierre and St Just believe the solution is to get tougher, not to relax

The Committee is given the power to issue warrants for arrest. A National emergency is declared. The constitution suspended. There is conscription for the army.

Saint-Just declares that they will punish anyone who is “passive in the affairs of the Revolution”. In other words you can now be executed for showing insufficient zeal – for doing nothing. Generals are decreed not to have inflicted enough damage on the enemy are charged with treason.

We are entering the period known as The Terror. It's a deliberate policy – the administration are the terrorists

Finally news comes from Toulon, the insurrection has been suppressed and the British thrown out, by revolutionary soldiers under Napoleon Bonaparte.

“You see” says St Just “our strategy is working.”

## 10. THE LAW OF SUSPECTS

Almost 200 000 people are detained according to the new “Law of Suspects.”

Danton's own loyal followers are being denounced. Fabre, in a panic, offers evidence about Danton financial irregularities

Marie Antoinette is finally accused and tried for treason. She offers nothing in her own defence and is executed the next day



Danton falls ill and retires with Louise to the country. He feels distanced from Camille - whom he sees as complicit - and alienated from the revolution he started.

Robespierre tells Camille he bears Danton no malice. They are simply doing what has to be done. Things will start to improve now...

## EPISODE 6 - THE TERROR

### 1. DANTONS ILLNESS

Danton lies sick, in his family home in the country.

He wracked with periodic fevers, uninterested in his young wife, as though his own body somehow mirrors the hectic, feverish, disordered state of the French body politic.

Physicians bleed him and talk of balancing the humours.

### 2. BLOODLETTING IN PARIS AND THE PROVINCES

In Paris the court now sits for eighteen hours at a stretch. The prosecutor is exhausted from all the prosecuting, ditto the executioner

Under St Just's iron rule the military are performing better. The battle against the Austrians turns slightly in their favour. News comes that insurrections by the rebels of Lyon and Bordeaux are abating.

### 3. CAPTURE OF BRISSOT, EXECUTION OF ORLEANS

Finally Jacques Brissot is captured. Returned to Paris, he and the former Duke of Orleans are condemned to death.

Orléans dines well for his last meal (oysters, cutlets, a good Bordeaux) and attends the scaffold elegantly attired. 'Well, my good man,' he says to the executioner, 'let's hurry it up, shall we?'

### 4. ROBESPIERRE'S REQUEST

Robespierre goes relentlessly on, feeling like a cog in a machine: not enough boots for the army, not enough food for the poor.

Even St Just's fearsome ruthlessness is not enough of itself. He needs Danton's power to inspire the mob. He writes a careful letter to Danton asking him to come back. The Revolution isn't a game he can leave whenever he chooses.

### 5. DANTON RETURNS

Danton returns. He's bored in the country, he's recovered from his illness and he figures that, in Paris, he can't make things any worse - maybe his gifts of oratory can improve things.

He goes first to Camille, then Robespierre. Factions within factions.

Just a few more arrests and then the killings can stop. None of them believe it. But he gives his virtuoso speeches, rallies the people, and Robespierre praises him.

## 7. FREE SPEECH

Bolstered by Danton's return, conflicted about his own role in the terror, Camille starts up his newspaper again. The first edition praises Danton, the great revolutionary. At home now, settled with Lucile and their child, Camille feels he has found himself again. Wife and family. A moral centre.



The third edition mentions the Roman tyrant Tiberius. Robespierre thinks he's being compared to the tyrant and accuses Camille of sedition.

They argue. Camille argues for freedom of the press as a pillar of the Revolution. He says Robespierre and St Just must learn to accept criticism as well as dishing it out

St Just sees things differently and Danton warns Camille about publicly antagonising Robespierre.

Camille says his primary allegiance was and is to the truth. He's sick of being protected; of pleasing Danton and placating Robespierre and running between the two and ministering to their all-devouring egos and arrogant self-conceits.

## 8. ST JUST CAMPAIGNS AGAINST CAMILLE AND DANTON

Saint-Just the “Angel of Death” encourages Robespierre to bring Camille to trial: “Your friend conspires. Bring him before the Tribunal and let him answer these charges. That showman Danton is just driven by greed. Where are the Crown Jewels? His friend Fabre all but admits to fraud. What do they need all that money for? Maybe your friends are plotting a Coup?”

In January Robespierre is sent papers to prove beyond doubt Fabre’s involvement in forgery and financial corruption. He shakes with frustration and rage. He bears no special love towards Danton but accusing Danton will implicate their mutual friend, Camille

At a rowdy meeting of the Jacobin club, Camille is accused by St Just of undermining the leadership.

Danton stands up to support Camille’s belief in freedom of the press. But Danton’s own power is waning. The Jacobins know he is corrupt and are turning against him too.

## 9. THE LIST OF ENEMIES

Danton’s friend Fabre d’Églantine is arrested. Publishers start to refuse to print Camille’s newspaper – a sure sign he is falling from favour.

Robespierre warns Danton he must disown Fabre if he’s to save his own skin. ... and Camille too. Danton fulminates against this. Is everyone now an enemy?!

Camille’s father in law Claude Duplessis is arrested ...and released. Three weeks later the conspirator who arrested him (Hébert) is himself arrested.

The mood of mutual distrust now infects everything. Peasants refuse to send their produce to the cities for fear of being arrested as profiteers.

Robespierre says he deplures factions and violence, but he would rather destroy the factions by violence than see the Revolution fall into the wrong hands.

Saint-Just, sensing victory, draws up his own list of enemies. Danton’s name is first on the list.

## 10. CAMILLE AND DANTON FACE THE COMMITTEE

Robespierre is cornered – realising he can no longer protect Danton without aligning himself with the man and putting himself in danger. So be it. Let Danton fall.

Camille breaks with Robespierre and speaks up for Danton at the Convention: “A few weeks, gentlemen, and you will be wishing you had Danton to rally the city for you. If you proceed against him you pass into a new phase of history, for which you are ill-prepared.”

The debate is loud and panicked and disorderly but the Committee for Public Safety control the guillotine and for more of the old Cordeliers, fear now governs the vote. The Arrest warrants are approved for Danton, Fabre and Camille

## **11. A KNOCK AT THE DOOR**

That night, Desmoulins and Danton, sit with their wives waiting for the early morning arrest in their separate homes.

The long night ends and the knock comes at each man's door ....

## EPISODE 7 - THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE

### 1. AWAITING TRIAL

The preparation for the trial is a farce; Saint-Just has prevented witnesses for the defence and has ordered the trial straight away.

Camille sits in prison, drafting a defence to charges of which he has not yet been notified. He receives word that his wife Lucille may also be indicted – for infidelity of all things – an is terrified she will follow him to the guillotine.

Lucile fears only for her husband – campaigning tirelessly for his release

### 2. ROBESPIERRE OFFERS A DEAL

Robespierre comes to the prison one night with deals and offers and promises for Camille: turn against Danton and he can still be saved.

Camille won't deal.

They're interrupted by the sound of Danton, laughing uproariously in an adjacent cell. "How can that man laugh in a place like this?" the reason is he thinks the people will back him. He thinks he can carry the trial through the sheer force of his personality.

### 3. DAY ONE OF THE TRIAL

The trial takes place. A mob stand outside and spectators cram the court.



The theatres of Paris are empty. This is the only show in town. Fourteen men have to be tried in three days. Danton halts the droning proceedings by demanding a commission be appointed, to write to the Convention.

The crowd roars and chants *La Marseillaise*. The riot travels back to the street. But the court is cleared and the prisoners sent to their cells. Day one has already gone. Time will not be on their side.

#### 4. DAY TWO

Day two and it's a mess already. Judge Fourquier subpoenas a witness, but the court, mistakenly, arrests him.

Danton is in fiery form, demanding his right to speak. He set up this damn Tribunal; he knows how it is supposed to work. The galleries will not stop singing and the judge and prosecutor's voices cannot be heard.

Camille has spent nights in the cells drafting his defence, but so far the judges will not let him speak. They proceed to the complex financial irregularities of which Danton and Fabre are undoubtedly guilty. Their co-accused are known forgers and thieves. St Just arranged it like this – he wants guilt by association, not a political trial

Finally, Danton is permitted to take the stand. He has always been a great orator but now he is speaking to save his life.

The crowd is with him, interrupting with cheers. After two hours the prosecutor demands an adjournment; Outwardly Danton shows no sign of flagging. Inwardly he has suddenly come to realize it's all for nothing: "I'm a dead man and so are my friends."

#### 5. DAY THREE

Day three begins. No witnesses are called as the Committee of Public Safety hasn't approved the list. Danton is furious. Lucile is exhausted from petitioning. One of the few public figures brave enough to take sides with Camille is his father – the provincial lawyer who Camille could never live up to. Now he writes a letter declaring his son to be the first and the more principled of the revolutionaries.

Camille himself is in a state of emotional collapse. Danton calls Robespierre as a witness; but no one makes a move.

The prosecutors approach the judge. The crowds are getting out of control and it is time the wrangling ends. Fourquier announces he will send to the Convention for directions on how the trial should proceed.

Danton is pleased. He thinks he still has friends in the Convention. A majority perhaps.

## 6. ARREST OF LUCILE

But Saint-Just has one more trick to play – he issues an arrest warrant for Lucile Desmoulins, claiming Camille’s wife has been found conspiring to free the prisoners and in turn assassinate the Committee.

The Convention must be told this before the debate. For everyone’s safety, given the real and present risk of assassination, the court must silence the prisoners and bring a swift conclusion to the trial.

Robespierre accepts the argument and signs Lucile’s arrest warrant. He knows its also a death sentence for his friend.



## 7. DAY FOUR

The judge announces that as time is very short they will only be tried on documentary evidence – there will be no more grandstanding. Ignoring this Danton stands and states he wishes to resume his defence. And at these words the judge announces that the trial is closed.

Camille demands to read out his statement; he is denied.

The prisoners are sent below but Camille refuses to budge. The officers beat him and drag him along the marble floor. He wants Robespierre to know, he shouts, to remember this.

The jury retires and the crowd drift outside to take their places along the death-route and around the scaffold.

## **8. THE SENTENCING**

The verdict is returned and the judge decides not to have the prisoners brought in while he reads it. He doesn't want another scene.

None of the prisoners actually hear their death sentence as Danton has started to shout and argue: "The people will judge (me ), not you." The executioner calmly gets on with cutting their hair short for the guillotine.

Camille still struggles, though his hands are tied. Danton reaches down and takes the locket of Lucile's hair from around his Camille's neck and puts it into his friend's tied hands. Camille is quieter now. In the end it comes down to this – a token or symbol of something greater than human folly – the hair of a lover... the blood of a King.

## **9. THE LONGEST JOURNEY**

"Only the best quality revolutionaries in this carriage," jokes Danton. He holds Camille close to him. Camille is crying but its for the things of beauty they once possessed and have now lost – the ideals of the Republic, his family, Lucile. Danton whispers to him that he needs to be strong and die with dignity.

The sun is setting, " At this rate it will be dark by the time we are dead." Says Danton gloomily

## **10. EXECUTION OF CAMILLE**

The arrive at the guillotine where a huge crowd awaits

Camille goes before Danton. He smiles and speaks to the executioner, Danton cannot watch ...then it is his turn at last.

## **11. DANTON'S LAST WORDS**

He says his only satisfaction is that he suspects Robespierre will not be far behind. 'Show my head to the people,' he says to the executioner, 'it's worth the trouble.'

Then he kneels and bows his head, the blade falls and France's great orator is silent.



## EPISODE 8 CITIZEN ROBESPIERRE

### 1. THE GUILLOTINE DISMANTLED

The guillotine is being dismantled, moved from the place to the revolution and re-erected in the site where the Bastille once stood, that its horrors may be properly associated with the old regime.

### 2. THE FESTIVAL OF THE SUPREME BEING

The town is in a slightly forced mood of celebration. Robespierre has proposed, and the Convention has ratified an official religion, the Cult of the Supreme Being.

Robespierre was raised a Catholic and has always nurtured a strange mystical belief in the essential goodness or "vertu" of the Common man

The "Festival of the Supreme Being" is his celebration of that ideal. It is held on 8 June - the Christian holiday of Pentecost, when the apostles were imbued with divine spirit.



Robespierre - as newly elected President - leads the festival procession and delivers a speech in praise of virtue.

### 3. BACKLASH

The festivities go off according to plan but many leaders involved in the Festival agree that Robespierre has taken things a bit too far. Chief of police Fouche - the hard man

charged with putting down rebellion in the provinces - openly ridicules Robespierre at the Jacobin club. The convention buzzes with rumour that Robespierre is attempting to create a new religion, with himself as its God.

#### 4. ROBESPIERRE OVER-REACHES

Robespierre is deaf to such criticism, increasingly isolated through the exercise of power. Following a suspected assassination attempt, he pushes through a law without consultation in the committee, which allows for execution on suspicion and without any sort of trial.

#### 6. FOCHE RECALLED, EVADES ARREST

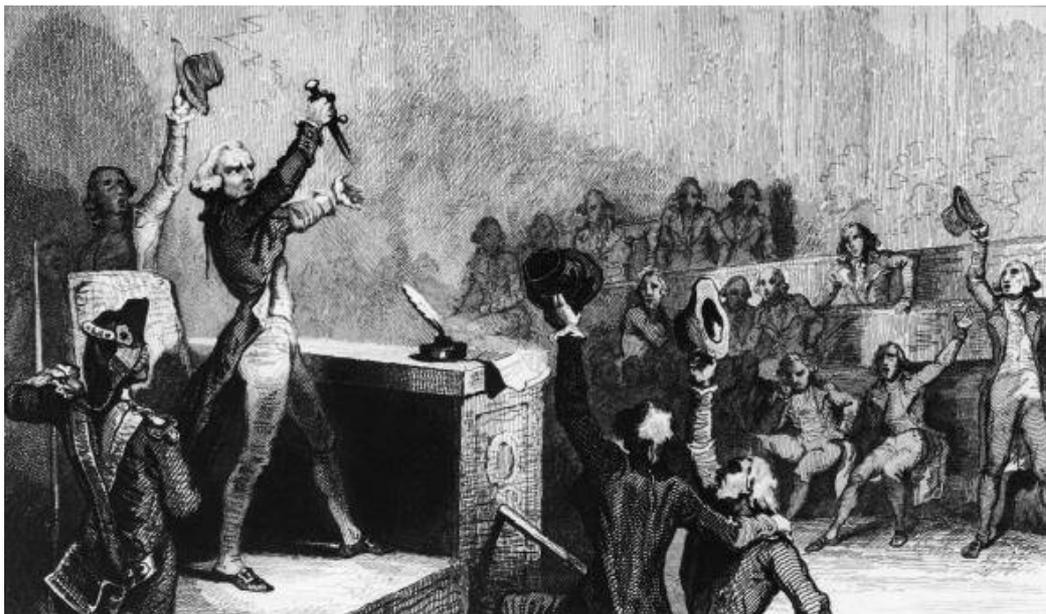
The public are resistant to revolutionary conceits like the new calendar, which doesn't really work. At the same time the provinces are in arms about the excessive use of force by Robespierre's military envoys like Fouche

Robespierre recalls Fouche to Paris to account for his actions, and then expels him from the Jacobin Club.

Fouche evades arrest, moving house to house, warning members of the Convention that Robespierre is their enemy, whilst organising a coup d'état.

#### 7. ROBESPIERRE DEFENDS HIMSELF

In response Robespierre appears at the Convention and delivered a two-hour-long speech, defending himself against charges of dictatorship and tyranny. He proceeds to imply that members of the Convention are guilty of conspiracy .



The following day, Saint-Just starts to speak in support of Robespierre is was not allowed to continue. When Robespierre gets up again he is once again shouted down. "The blood of Danton chokes him!"

Robespierre replies angrily saying he tried to stand up for D0anton "Is it Danton you regret? ... Cowards! Why didn't you defend him?"

## 8. THE CONVENTION VERSUS THE COMMUNE

The argument escalates into an armed stand off between soldiers loyal to Robespierre and those loyal to the his opponents in the Convention.

The two forces confronted each other at City Hall (the Hotel De Ville), where many of Robespierre's Commune troops desert at the critical moment.

In order to avoid capture, Robespierre's brother Augustin throws himself out of a window, and breaks both of his legs

Robespierre is shot. (Some say he attempted suicide) The bullet shatters his lower jaw.



## 8. IMPRISONMENT OF ROBESPIERRE

For the remainder of the night, Robespierre is moved to a table in the room of the Committee of Public Safety., then to the small chamber where Marie Antoinette was held prior to execution.



## 9. EXECUTION OF ROBESPIERRE

The next day, 28 July 1794, Robespierre is guillotined without trial - victim to his own draconian legislation.

His brother Augustin, plus St Just and fifteen other followers are also executed.

When clearing Robespierre's neck, the executioner tears off the bandage that was holding his shattered jaw in place, causing Robespierre to produce an agonised scream until the fall of the blade silences him.

## 10. ROYALISTS ATTACK THE CONVENTION

The following year inflation spirals out of control and there is rioting once more on the streets of Paris over the price of Bread.

Resurgent Royalists, financed and armed partly by overseas interests, mount an attack on the National convention.

Former General Napoleon Bonaparte, The hero of Toulon, is given command of the improvised forces in defence of the Convention in the Tuileries. He uses musket fire, Cannon and grapeshot to repel the attackers, killing hundreds.



When the smoke clears, the mob is dispersed. Peace reigns for once on the blood-soaked streets of Paris.

Joseph Fouché remarks approvingly that the revolution has finally found its natural leader. And thus begins a new era – the building of a new Republic under Bonaparte

That is the true meaning of revolution - not just revolt, but a constant cycle of overthrow and re-invention in which each new turn of the wheel is different – but not entirely different - from the revolution before.

**THE END**