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The Queen's Knight

by Frank Cossa

1 It is October 1793 in Paris and Marie-Antoinette, the former
2 Queen of France faces death in Frank Cossa's *The Queen's*
3 *Knight*.

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6 **QUEEN:** I have been a prisoner of these people for four
7 years. I watched them march to the gates of the
8 palace and slaughter six hundred Swiss guards. I
9 watched as all my friends were murdered or driven
10 into exile. I watched them execute my husband who
11 was their King. I watched them drag my children
12 screaming from my arms so that after a year I don't
13 know if they're alive or dead. I have lived in this room
14 for seventy-six days. They allow me two dresses, no
15 undergarments, no cloak, no blanket against the
16 dampness that runs down the walls. There is never
17 any fire wood. There is always a guard outside my cell
18 who must keep his eyes on me at all times. At all
19 times. Some days ago the Princess de Lamballe, my
20 last loyal friend, returned from a safe exile to be near
21 me in my difficult time. She came here to visit me. The
22 mob saw her and I watched them tear her to pieces.
23 Her head was impaled on a stake and raised up to my
24 window there. *(She points.)* One man made himself
25 moustaches out of her private hair while the others,
26 laughing and cheering, threw parts of her ... her body
27 up at me. You see, monsieur, for four years one
28 horror has followed another. They have allowed me
29 no comfort, no rest. They have spared me no cruelty,
30 no shock, no terror. And you wish me to ask these

people for... 15 a favor?