

# Jose rizal moview review

[People](#), [Jose Rizal](#)



## **Timothy Tackett**

Imagine trying to understand the make up of a leaf by simply staring at it with the naked eye. You would have a very clear idea of its basic shape, color, and texture but not much else. Now picture studying a leaf under a microscope. The leaf is visible on a much deeper cellular level, and because you understand the individual cells that make up the leaf you can better comprehend the leaf itself. In his book, *When the King Took Flight*, author, Timothy Tackett takes a “microscope” approach to the French Revolution by focusing on a singular 48-hour period in which King Louis attempted to flee France, and how this affair effected everyone from the royal family to ordinary citizens. Tackett delves into the events that occurred on June 20 and 21, 1791 to highlight the considerable significance of the King’s flight, and in doing so gives readers a deeper understanding of the French Revolution as a whole.

Broadening the scope, the French Revolution started as a result of a very economically unstable France. King Louis XVI attempted to correct the economic crisis through unpopular taxation schemes in which the clergy and noblemen were exempt, leaving the common citizens heavily and unjustly taxed. This created tension between the classes as the lower class population became increasingly poor. Louis attempted to resolve the taxation problem, but failed miserably. This resulted in the break away of the third estate, the formation of the National Assembly, and the draft of a new constitution . The air of revolution quickly spread throughout France. This is evident in uprisings like the storming of the Bastille, the Women’s march on

Versailles, and the passage of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen . These significant acts represented the changing state of the French government and the dwindling power of the King.

This insurgent France is the state in which the King fled Paris. Louis' attempted escape was such a pivotal point in the French Revolution because it reshaped the people's attitude toward the monarchy, heightened fears of invasion and conspiracy, and eventually led to the Reign of Terror.

The flight to Varennes revealed the King's lack of loyalty to the nation of France and completely shifted the people's attitude toward kingship.

Previous to his escape, Louis had shown outward support and compliance to the Revolution. Tackett explains, " Later developments seemed to present evidence that Louis had put aside once and for all the prejudices of his caste and embraced the Revolution. " These assumptions about the King were supported by his actions at the Festival of Federation, where he swore by oath to uphold the new constitution . But the night of Louis' attempted escape, he left a decree that completely undermined everything he had sworn to the people and revealed where his allegiance truly lied. Tackett writes,

He complained bitterly of all the royal powers that had been stripped from the throne by the National Assembly: direct control over the army, over diplomacy, over provincial administrators; the right to issue pardons; and indeed the power to reject any law of which he disapproved.

Additionally, Louis wrote he was angry with the drastic cuts in his personal revenues and the general slights to his honor as King . Louis words and decision to leave Paris revealed to the people his true feelings toward the Revolution and his marriage to the idea of his absolute and divine power. The King could no longer hide behind the false curtain of support he had put up for so long. The entire population now knew that Louis could never give up the traditional expectations he had for his role as King. The people's attitude towards kingship completely shifted as they realized the expectations of a king would never comply with the Revolution . Louis' attempted flight and decree made this clear and as a result, tarnished the entire population's perception of kingship, pushing the revolutionaries farther toward the idea of a republic.

The next reason Tackett shows the Flight to Varennes served as a turning point in the French Revolution is that it intensified fears of invasion and conspiracy. When the King was brought back to Paris after the flight, the more radical members of the assembly wanted him out of the picture all together. His actions also forced the moderate members to defend a Monarch that had just betrayed his nation and failed at his duties laid out in the constitution . Neighboring countries quickly took notice of the state of the divided assembly and became worried that the radicals would succeed in removing the king all together. Austria issued the Declaration of

Pillnitz, warning the French that if they did not restore the Monarchy, Austria and Prussia would intervene militarily. These surrounding countries feared that France's spirit of revolution would cross borders and spread throughout

their people. The neighboring countries saw the French population's complete loss of respect for Louis after his flight, which intensified their concerns. The growing threats of invasion created stress and dissention within the increasingly divided Assembly, as they were forced to not only try and avoid civil war, but protect France from foreign threats. The King's flight altered the course of the Revolution by inflating the division within the Assembly as members struggled to combat the fear of foreign invasion and intervention.

It is in this same way that the Flight to Varennes played a crucial role in the Reign of Terror. The discord heightened by the king's betrayal eventually gave way to the split between the radical and moderate members of the Assembly. This state of internal division led the French people to the rule of Robespierre and the extreme violence of the Reign of Terror.

If the King had not betrayed his country by attempting to escape Paris, it is probable that the Assembly would not have divided so indefinitely, that the radicals would not have taken the upper hand, and that the internal and destructive Reign of Terror would never have taken place.

Tackett uses, *When the King Took Flight*, to give readers new insight into the course of the French Revolution. By focusing on the night of June 20, 1791, he underscores the power that a singular event had to change the course of the French Revolution entirely and perhaps the history of the world. Tackett writes,

The dramatic effort of Louis XVI and his family to escape the capital and abandon the new government established in his name set in motion an extraordinary chain of actions and reactions with profound effects on all elements of society and virtually every corner of the nation .

As an author, Tackett presents a unique approach to studying history. His method is one of specificity, diving into a miniscule part of the Revolution in order to understand the movement as a whole. In *When the King Took Flight*, Tackett uses this approach to successfully illustrate the significance of the Flight to Varennes, and give readers a new understanding of the shocking events of the French Revolution.