**The Revolution:**

Revolution could have been averted in France after the necklace case, just as it could have been averted in America after the Boston Tea Party, but a course of action had been set in motion. The monarchy was humbled by the noblemen in court and people, all done with impunity. Going forward, the opponents of the regime, first among the nobles then later among the merchants and finally in the peasantry took heed and didn’t let up until the final violent overthrow of the French monarchy and the Terror among its citizens that followed. The nobles who sought to check Louis’s power and others like Phillipe Egalite who resented the King, came to be caught up themselves in the whirlwind of Revolution. That Revolution would claim the lives of thousands of nobleman including Phillipe, and end the privileges nobles had held in France. This was not what the nobles intended when they sought to vindicate Rohan and strike a blow against the King and Queen.

**The Reversal:**

When Marie Antoinette learned of the necklace affair, she instinctively insisted on a public trial to avenge the offence to her honour and dignity. No one could have imagined how her act of hubris would trigger the catastrophic upheaval of Revolution in the seven years that followed. In 1786, Madame Lamotte was imprisoned and branded; Rohan was acquitted at trial but forced from his Cardinal post to a remote posting. Marie Antoinette sat on her throne, still the glamorous powerful Queen of France, meeting out punishment to those who dared transgress her honour. In seven year’s time, the Revolution would reverse the positions of the three players in this story. In 1793, Lamotte who had escaped her prison lived in comfort in England. The fortune she and her husband shared from the necklace was enhanced by the amounts made from the sales in France of her best-selling pamphlets against the Queen. Lamotte had become a hero of the Revolution. In 1793, Rohan too was living in comfort in exile. In the early years of Revolution, he returned in triumph and was elected to the Assembly. But Rohan saw the violent turn of revolution against the nobility and clergy including his family. Rohan escaped France to live out his life in a comfortable exile.

**The World Upside Down:**

In the ultimate role reversal, the hunter became the prey. 1793 saw the final destruction of Marie Antoinette – humbled, humiliated and finally beheaded by her own subjects. The years of Revolution took everything away from Marie – her palaces, her jewels, her servants, her fine clothes, her friends and her family. Gone was her beauty and finery in which she took such pride and all the other trappings of her once fabulous life. In the end, Marie Antoinette was alone. She was taken from her prison cell, as a poor broken widow in her rags, old before her time. Now, it was SHE who would be the prisoner in the dock. SHE would have to answer the charges of the revolutionary tribunal, including the necklace case allegations of Madame Lamotte.

**The Queen Beheaded:**

These charges still rang in her ears in the jeers of the crowd as Marie Antoinette road to her date with Madame Guillotine. The former Queen now rode in an open cart, her hands tied behind her back, and held in tether like a chained dog. Lamotte must have relished the irony that seven years after she was flogged, branded and humiliated, seven years after Lamotte swore vengeance, it was the turn of her tormentor to face punishment – Marie Antoinette was beheaded at age 37, her fair head held high for the populace to cheer her death. Such was the pendulum swing of great French Revolution, first set in motion by the case of the Queen’s necklace.

Citation:

" The Diamond Necklace Affair - Marie Antoinette Online." Marie Antoinette Online - http://www.marie-antoinette.org/articles/diamondnecklace/ (Accessed July 8, 2012).