

## **PASSION / Madame DuBarry (1919)** **Ernst Lubitsch (1892-1947)**

### OVERVIEW

*Auteur:* Ernst Lubitsch was a German-American film director, producer, writer, and actor. He is famous for urbane comedies of manners. With the growth of his prestige, his films came to be known as having *the Lubitsch touch*. Lubitsch was born in 1892 in Berlin, as the son of Simon Lubitsch, a tailor, and Anna (née) Lindenstaedt. His family was Ashkenazi Jewish. He did not enter his father's tailoring business, and by 1911, he was a member of Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater. Lubitsch was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Director three times for *The Patriot* (1928), *The Love Parade* (1929), and *Heaven Can Wait* (1943). In 1946, he received an Honorary Academy Award for his contributions to the art of motion pictures. His best-known works are *Trouble in Paradise* (1932), *Design for Living* (1933), *Ninotchka* (1939), *The Shop Around the Corner* (1940), *To Be or Not to Be* (1942) and *Heaven Can Wait* (1943). Lubitsch died of a heart attack on November 30, 1947, in Hollywood at the age of 55.

*Film:* *Madame DuBarry* is a 1919 German silent film directed by Ernst Lubitsch. It is about the life of Madame Du Barry. It was written by Norbert Falk and Hanns Kräly. The cinematographers were Theodor Sparkuhl and Kurt Waschneck. The title role was taken by Pola Negri, Louis XV was played by Emil Jannings, and Armand de Foix was played by Harry Liedtke. In the US distribution, the film had an alternative title called *Passion*. The film's sets were designed by the art director Kurt Richter. The film was made at the Tempelhof Studios in Berlin. It is based on *Memoirs d'un médecin* by Alexandre Dumas.

*Historical background:* The film is based on the life of Madame DuBarry. Madame DuBarry was the last maîtresse-en-titre of King Louis XV of France. The maîtresse-en-titer means the chief royal mistress of the King of France who was thus officially acknowledged. This position could come with significant power because some mistresses were known to 'advise the king, broker favors for clients, forge alliances, and negotiate with foreign diplomats'. To be a maîtresse-en-titer, she had to be married to a high-ranking person so that she could be allowed at the court. After being hastily married to Comte Guillaume du Barry, she was given a false birth certificate which obscured her poor background. When she arrived at the French court, she was disapproved of by many because of her background of being a commoner and the fact that she had worked as a prostitute. Madame DuBarry was also disliked by Marie Antoinette who refused to speak to her. She was executed by guillotine during the French revolution because of accounts of treason. She was suspected of having assisted émigrés flee from the Revolution.

### CHARACTERS

<i>King Louis XV:</i>	King of France, an irresponsible man caring more for his interests and women.
<i>Choiseul, Minister:</i>	An ambitious man who tries to increase his status by being close to the king.
<i>Duchess of Grammont:</i>	The minister's sister who wishes to marry the king, someone ambitious for power
<i>Jeanne Dubarry:</i>	A young girl who has ambitions to raise her status and gain power and wealth
<i>Armand de Foix:</i>	A young student; Jeanne's lover, a man with high ideals.
<i>Paillet:</i>	A shoemaker, Armand's friend, an enemy of the aristocratic class
<i>Zamor:</i>	Jeanne's servant, a negro
<i>Guillaume Dubarry:</i>	An aristocrat who starts living together with Jeanne
<i>Don Diego:</i>	Spanish ambassador who is impressed by Jeanne's beauty
<i>Madame Labille:</i>	Owner of the clothing shop where Jeanne works
<i>Lebel:</i>	Valet of the king, someone who helps Jeanne to enter the aristocratic class

## SYNOPSIS

Jeanne works in a clothing store. One day, Madame Labille asks her to take a hat to Marquise de Belfort. She goes to her lover called Armand to spend the hours before she goes to Marquise de Belfort. After she leaves her lover, her box gets damaged during a royal procession. Don Diego, the man who caused the accident invites her over to his mansion after paying for the damage. In Don Diego's mansion, she meets Count Dubarry. A day later, at the opera ball, Jeanne's lovers Don Diego and Armand fight each other and Don Diego gets killed. While Armand is arrested, Count Dubarry persuades Jeanne to stay with him in his mansion. After a while of them living together, Count Dubarry has financial problems, so he asks Jeanne to go to Minister Choisel to make him sign a document. While she is about to return, king Louis XV sees her and takes an interest in her. On one of Count Dubarry's game nights, she meets Lebel, the valet of the king who later asks Count Dubarry to leave his girlfriend to the king. Count Dubarry accepts this offer as he will also be rewarded for it. Soon, the king is in the orbit of Jeanne. Jeanne saves Armand from being executed and makes him be promoted to lieutenant. Jeanne is soon introduced to the court. However, the crowds are not happy with the mistress' luxurious lifestyle while they are starving and rebel against the king. The soldiers open fire at the crowds. Several people are dead. Armand leaves his position after seeing this atrocity. He is disappointed after he finds out that the king's mistress is Jeanne. Meanwhile, the crowds protest because of bread prices. Armand, his friend Paillet, and several other people scheme against Jeanne. Meanwhile, the king comes down with a black box. Soon he dies and Jeanne is banished from the palace. Soon after the public rises in revolt. Jeanne is found by Paillet and sentenced to death by Armand. Nevertheless, Armand still loves her and tries to save her. Paillet captures them and shoots Armand to death. Jeanne is beheaded.

## SCENES

### JEANETTE AND ARMAND

**The clothing store is busy** The film begins in a clothing store where people are sewing clothes. Three young girls are sewing clothes and laughing merrily. However, the owner of the shop called Madame Labille wants them to be more serious at work. She says to one of the girls 'Take this hat at once to the Marquise de Belfort.' The girl puts the hat in a box and prepares to leave the store. Before she goes, she puts on makeup. The owner of the shop sees this and gets angry. Then the girl leaves the shop.



**Dropping the box** While she is walking, a man sees her and starts following her. Later on, she drops the box. The man helps her and starts carrying the package. Soon she sees a young man looking out the window and waving to her. She runs and hugs the young man. She says to him: 'Mister has been so kind as to take the box for me.' The two laugh while the mister looks surprised and disappointed. The girl thanks the man and takes the box back.



**The girl and her lover** She enters the house. The young man mischievously hides under a sofa as a joke so the girl cannot find him. The girl looks around, then sits on the sofa. The man tickles her ankles from under the sofa. The girl is frightened at first but soon understands that it is all a joke. Then the man comes out, and they hug and kiss each other. The girl pretends to jokingly berate him. The girl says that she does not have much time and that she has to be at the house of Marquise de Belfort at 5. The man does not let her go. Hours pass and



they are still cuddling each other. The girl takes the box, kisses the man, and leaves saying: 'Until Sunday.'

**The arrival of the king and an accident** The King arrives at the main square. Everybody gathers in the main square. Officials come riding horses. Next, Don Diego, the Spanish ambassador arrives. Meanwhile, the girl is trying to pass through the crowds to be on time at Marquise de Belfort's house. The girl accidentally drops the box, and a horse steps on it and damages the hat inside. The girl starts crying uncontrollably: 'I am sure Madame Labille will send me to hell.' Don Diego smiles. The crowds continue following the royal squad.

**Don Diego pays for the damage** Madame Labille sees the damaged box and starts berating the girl. She slaps the girl's face because of the damaged condition of the hat. The girl cries while Madame Labille keeps on berating her. Don Diego enters the clothing shop. He says to Madame Labille: 'Please don't punish the young lady.' He asks how much damage is caused. He gives money to Madame Labille to make up for the damage caused. He smiles at the young girl and makes her laugh. Then they go outside and he kisses her hand: 'It is a pity that such beautiful hands have to do these jobs. It would be my pleasure if you came to visit me next Sunday.' The girl happily says yes. When she returns to the store, Madame Labille behaves well toward her.



**Sunday afternoon** The young girl has worn beautiful clothes and puts on a lot of makeup. She ponders about whom she shall go to see: 'Armand or Don Diego?' She plays a game in which she counts the ribbons in her dress to see to whom she shall go: 'Armand!' She looks discontent with the result. So, she counts the ribbons once again: 'Don Diego!' This time she looks very happy with the result. It is as if she had gained a victory.



**Armand accompanies her** It turns out, to her surprise, that Armand is waiting for her at her house's entrance. He kisses her hand. She tries to get rid of him: 'I don't have time for you, honey. I must do the fittings of a new dress for the Spanish ambassador's wife.' Armand says: 'It doesn't matter. I'll accompany you.' They happily go to the Spanish ambassador's mansion. She tells Armand not to wait for her: 'It can take hours.' However, Armand is ready to wait for her. So, she enters the mansion.



**In the mansion** An official takes her hat. The curtains of the main room open and she looks at the luxury of the design. She looks around in awe and starts eating from the grapes on the table. Don Diego soon arrives. He kisses her hand and they sit at the table. Meanwhile, Armand is waiting for her to come outside. The girl and Don Diego drink wine. Don Diego starts hugging the girl. She behaves as if she is not happy with this behavior. But then she kisses him. Then they hug and kiss each other.



**Armand realizes the truth** Armand says to a man coming out of the mansion that his girlfriend is trying on the wife of the Spanish ambassador a new robe. The man starts laughing: 'Well, your girlfriend has fooled you. Don Diego is not married.'



Armand is shocked. He tries to enter the mansion but the man does not let him. He asks Armand to go away. So, Armand leaves.



**A few days later** Armand is sitting in his room with an unhappy face. A woman enters and brings him a letter. He opens the letter in anger. The letter is from the young girl: 'My dear treasure, forgive me for having behaved like that towards you, but my heart will always belong to you. If you no longer feel angry with me and forgive me, come to the opera ball tomorrow. Eternally yours, Jeanne.' Armand crumples the letter and throws it to the ground in anger. But then he takes it back to his hands and opens it as Jeanne is dear to his heart after all.

**The opera ball and a crime** The opera ball is very crowded. People are entertaining themselves and dancing. They are frivolously laughing, dancing, and hugging each other. Count Dubarry is with two women who are kissing him. But soon he sees Jeanne sitting with Don Diego. He goes near them. As Jeanne is drinking wine, she notices Armand and runs to him. Armand kisses her. Don Diego, however, comes to separate them as he cannot bear to see such a sight. He and Armand start fighting each other. People separate them. As Jeanne and Armand try to leave the ball and go out from the back door, Don Diego finds them and starts fighting Armand again. Don Diego takes out his sword. Count Dubarry also arrives at the scene and gives his sword to Armand. Armand injures Don Diego who collapses to the ground. The officials arrest Armand. Meanwhile, Count Dubarry takes Jeanne away from the crime scene.

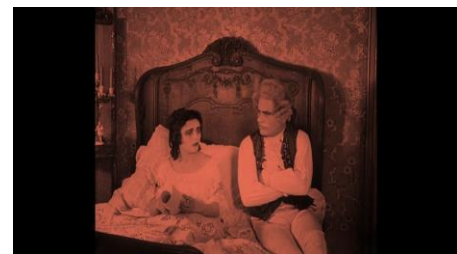


## JEANETTE AND ARISTOCRATS

**At Count Dubarry's mansion** Count Dubarry brings Jeanne to his mansion. Jeanne tries to escape but the Count stops her. He makes her sit at the table. He says to her: 'Keep in mind that your relationships with the young person can also bring charges against you. Here, on the other hand, you would be the mistress of my house.' He brings Jeanne a beautiful necklace. Jeanne excitedly looks at the mirror to see how the necklace looks on her. Count Dubarry kisses her afterward. Meanwhile, Armand is staying in prison. There are rats where he stays and he seems to be disgusted by them.



**One morning** Jeanne is sleeping peacefully. However, Count Dubarry is not in a good mood and behaves rather harshly toward her. He is holding a document in his hand. He wakes her rudely up and tells her that he is on the verge of bankruptcy if she does not help him. He gives her the document for her to read it. On the document, it is written: 'Claim to the city's treasury for my delivery of the Corsican expedition in the amount of 100,000 livres. Count Dubarry' 'With this letter you must present yourself before Minister Choiseul. They say he is very benevolent towards beautiful women.' Jeanne smiles: 'Minister Choiseul.'



**The Duchess Grammant, sister of the minister** Duchess Grammant enters the main hall of the minister's mansion. She sits on a chair. She says to him: 'I'm almost sure the king will propose to me today.' The minister smiles and says that he will keep all the other women away from him.



**King Louis XV and Jeanne** Jeanne is leaving the mansion in utter disappointment. She sits on a bank to rest for a bit. Meanwhile, King Louis XV also enters the mansion accompanied by his officials. The minister and his sister greet him in a reverential manner. The king sees Jeanne sitting on the bank and is immediately struck by her presence. He says: 'Such an enchanting encounter bodes well to start the day.' The minister sends one of the officials to send Jeanne away. The official goes to Jeanne and says to her: 'Get out of here right now, you insolent.' Jeanne runs away from the mansion. When King Louis XV cannot see her, he asks a servant to search for Jeanne immediately. He seems irritated by this situation: 'For once, a pretty girl shows up, they throw her out. No wonder the town doesn't like me!'



**Count Dubarry gets infuriated** Jeanne goes back to Count Dubarry. When she explains to the Count that the minister did not want to pay for the royalties, the Count gets infuriated. He is almost about to hit her. He forcefully takes her by the hand and behaves toward her as if she is a piece of furniture. Jeanne cries in sadness.



**Game Evening at Count Dubarry's** Every evening the noblest society gathers at Count Dubarry's for a game. Count Dubarry is playing cards. Meanwhile, Jeanne is sleeping in her bed. He wakes her up rudely and forces her to put on makeup and come to the main hall. She looks in the mirror in despair and starts crying. She comes to the game table. When she sits with the men, one of the men playing gets distracted by Jeanne's beauty. The man is the same man who sent her away from the mansion. She says to him: 'Don't you think, now, to chase the insolent person to hell again?' He shakes his head and smiles at her. A servant comes and says that the refreshment is served in the small cabinet. The man and Jeanne eat together.



**The official asks Count Dubarry to leave his girlfriend to the king** I have to present the king's wishes, he wishes to make amends for the affront inflicted on you this morning.' Jeanne looks up as if she is dreaming of something. At that moment, Count Dubarry enters the room. The man says to Count Dubarry: 'You would be doing me a great favor if you would leave your girlfriend to the king.' Count Dubarry seems unwilling to do so. The man insists that he will be rewarded. When Count Dubarry hears that he will be rewarded, he accepts the offer.

**Jeanne learns the protocol** The official goes near Jeanne and tells her to memorize all the rules of protocol well. He tries to train her about proper greeting and body language. She looks bewildered. This scene provides comic relief both for us the viewers and for Jeanne as she had suffered abuse at the hands of Count Dubarry.

**Will Armand be sentenced to death?** The king is reading a document and he is accompanied by the minister. In the document, it is written: 'In the name of the king, the student Armand de Foix has been found guilty of the death of the Spanish ambassador Don Diego and will be sentenced to death.' Before the majesty signs the document, the official comes inside and tells him that Jeanne is there.



**Jeanne meets the king** The king goes to the room where Jeanne is. Jeanne greets him respectfully. The king approaches her so she kisses his hand. But Jeanne mischievously kisses him on the cheek. The king looks baffled and surprised. Then he smiles. She sits near the king and the king kisses her hand. He sees the document that is hidden under her dress, he takes the document out on

which it is written: 'Claim to the city's treasury for my delivery of the Corsican expedition in the amount of 100,000 livres. Count Dubarry.' The king signs the document smilingly, puts the document back into her dress, then kisses Jeanne.



**The king takes good care of Jeanne** We see Jeanne in the bedroom with the king kissing her feet and making her wear her shoes. Jean changes her clothes with the help of the servants behind the paper wall. The king tries to look at her but she does not let him. Then she comes out and the king does her manicure. Accidentally he injures her finger while cutting her nails. Then the official comes in and says to the king that Minister Choiseul begs to be granted an audience urgently. The king looks irritated: 'The minister will have to wait.' The King stands up and wishes to leave. However, Jeanne says: 'I have not given you permission to leave.' So the king sits down. Jeanne seems content: 'Now you may leave.' The king kisses her hand and goes to talk to the minister.

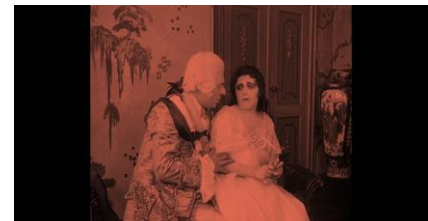


**The minister is disturbed by the king's behavior** When the official tells the minister that he will have to wait, he fumes internally. Outside, the minister and the official are talking about the king: 'It seems unacceptable to me to let the king arrange the affairs of state here in his mistress' pleasure palace.'



## ARMAND IS SAVED

**Jeanne saves Armand's life** The minister gives him the document about Armand de Foix to sign: 'The student Armand de Foix has been found guilty of the death of the Spanish ambassador Don Diego and will be sentenced to death.' At that moment, Jeanne enters the room. She says: 'Good morning, Minister!' She makes him kiss her hand. The king and Jeanne start laughing. Then she sees what is written on the document. To prevent Armand from being sentenced to death, she changes the places of the ink and the wax, so when the king tries to sign the document, he pours ink into the paper instead of wax, and the document is damaged. Then Jeanne pretends to cry. The king goes to console her. She says to the king: 'That wretch is my cousin. He defended my honor against Don Diego. I beg you to pardon him!' The king goes to the minister and makes it clear that Armand will be pardoned. The minister bows reverentially. The next day, the officials come near Armand and tell him that he has been pardoned thanks to the kindness of their merciful king. Armand is shocked as he is released from his bondages.



**Armand's encounter with Jeanne does not go according to Jeanne's expectations** The negro brings a document to the senior soldier. On the document, it is written thus: 'See that my servant leads before me Lieutenant Armand de Foix blindfolded and without him knowing who is calling him. Countess Dubarry.' The senior soldier explains what will happen to Armand. He adds that he cannot tell who he will be led to. Armand is amused by what is occurring. He is blindfolded. Then the negro servant brings him near Jeanne. She opens the blindfold. Armand is shocked and terrified to see Jeanne: 'You, here! You, the king's mistress? Do you know how much I suffered for you?' Jeanne wishes to hug him and explain things. But he does not want to have anything to do with her. And he forcefully pushes her away. Jeanne cannot fully understand what is going on: 'Is that how you thank me for getting you out of jail, for making you a lieutenant?' He is about to push Jeanne away once again but they finally hug each other passionately. Meanwhile, the king is approaching Jeanne's room. The negro servant notifies Jeanne and Armand that the king is coming. Armand demands



that she choose between the king and him. She replies: 'You know I love you, that I love only you. Ask me what you want, but not that!' Armand is disappointed to hear this. He pushes her away once again. He leaves the room by escaping through the window.

**Armand is promoted to Lieutenant of the Royal Guard** In the next scene, we see Armand cleaning his rifle while other soldiers stay away from him in a group and make fun of him. An official comes in and berates Armand. Then one of the soldiers comes near Armand to mock him. Soon, they start fighting. The same official enters the room and tells Armand to go to a senior soldier. The soldier is holding a document in his hand with a smile on his face. Armand reads the document on which it is written: 'By decree of His Majesty the King, Grenadier Armand de Foix will be promoted to Lieutenant of the Royal Guard.' Armand is shocked to receive this news.



## JEANNA AND KING

**Satirical poem of the minister's sister** The minister is near his sister who is writing a letter. He tells her that she should take more care of the king instead of writing unimportant letters. The minister's sister gives him the piece of paper on which she was writing. The minister reads: 'Jeanne, Jeanne, who can do everything, has done it to the king. There isn't a man in Paris who hasn't won her favor. King of hearts does not take offense, if nothing fits Jeannecita, he enjoys it just the same. Louis and Jeanne. Rataplan. Rataplan.' The sister looks very confident: 'Tomorrow all of Paris will sing this satirical poem.' The minister laughs enthusiastically.



**The crowds mock Jeanne** Meanwhile, the town square is full of crowds who are listening to a man reading the satirical poem about Jeanne and king Louis. The man hands out the poems to the excited crowds. Jeanne, who is passing through the streets carried by officials, stops and comes near him, and slaps him. Then she gives the man and the woman near him a big amount of money and takes the poems from them. However, after she leaves, the man takes out even more poems to distribute to the enthusiastic crowds.



**The king says Jeanne will be introduced to the court** Jeanne returns to the palace with the poems in her hand. She shows the poems to the king and says: 'I won't stay another minute with you if I don't get complete satisfaction.' Then the minister comes and looks at the poems. He asks what the Majesty intends to do. The king says that he will introduce Madame officially to court: 'So no one will dare offend her anymore.' The minister drops the poems he has in his hand, then leaves them alone. The king kisses Jeanne's hand. Surely, this is a victory for her.

**A Title is needed** A letter is brought to Count Dubarry. The letter is from Jeanne and says: 'My dear Dubarry, the king has decided to officially introduce me to court. To do this I will need a title of nobility, which I can only get through a wedding with an aristocrat. After reading this, Count Dubarry shouts: 'My brother! Count William Dubarry.'



**Count William Dubarry** Count William Dubarry is a lecherous man who is drunk most of the time. Count Dubarry visits him to explain the situation. He adds that he will receive 100,000 pounds for this act. William is shocked: '100,000 pounds? For that amount, I would marry the devil's grandmother.'

**Marriage** Count William Dubarry and Jeanne marry in the church where Count Dubarry and the official of the king accompany them. Jeanne enters a room full of aristocrats. All of the men bow before her. Some of the men say: 'I have a very special wedding present for you. Madame!' The door opens and a negro man enters the room who will possibly be her servant from then on. The man says to Jeanne: 'You are now the most powerful woman in France.' Jeanne looks out the window and sees a soldier who is Armand, her lover. She says: 'I wish that soldier over there be promoted immediately.' The officials do not wish to do that but she insists and her wish is accepted.



**The presentation of Jeanne at the court** The king enters the main hall. Everybody bows before him. Then comes Jeanne accompanied by servants. She bows to the king, then kisses his hand.



## REVOLUTION STARTS

**The crowds are angry with the palace** The minister and his sister whisper about something. Next, the minister opens the window where the voices of the crowds can be heard: 'Down with Dubarry!' The sister comes near the king and says ironically: 'The people cheer to the new favorite.' The king is infuriated. He angrily looks at the minister. The minister defends himself by saying: 'Her Majesty cannot make me responsible for the anger of the people.' The king says: 'We will see if the people have the courage to oppose my will.' He goes with Jeanne near the window. The crowds get scared when they see the king. Armand is also there and tells the crowds to go away. The crowds open the gates of the palace.



**Soldiers open fire at the crowds** The soldiers open fire at the crowds to make them go away and stop the rebellion. The minister says to Jeanne: 'I hope the Countess will be satisfied with the repair.' Many people are injured or fatally wounded. Jeanne cannot bear to see such a scene. She is almost about to faint. The minister's sister tries to talk to her, however, she does not want to speak anything with her. Afterward, she leaves with the king. Seeing Jeanne's attitude toward the minister and his sister, the people of the palace also decide to not talk with the minister and his sister.



**The public protest** Meanwhile, the public is protesting in front of the bakery because they cannot afford bread. The baker says: 'Complain to the king that bread is very expensive. He is the one who prevents the importation of cereals to protect his interests.' The crowd is angry. Armand comes and joins the crowd. They start stoning the windows of the bakery. Soon, officials come to stop the crowd. They arrest Armand.



**The minister asks about Armand de Foix** Meanwhile, Jeanne is living a very luxurious life. The minister enters her room. He kisses her hand and says: 'Maybe the lady Countess can give me some information about the whereabouts of Lieutenant Armand de Foix?' She hesitates and ultimately says that she does not know anything about this. At that moment, an official comes to the room and notifies that Armand de Foix has just been arrested. The minister goes to see Armand. He unties his





bonds and tells him: 'That woman, who will ruin France, has also destroyed you.' Armand says that if he were free, he would take revenge. The minister tells him that he is free and shakes his hand. Meanwhile, Jeanne has sent his negro servant to watch Armand. So, the negro servant follows Armand.

**The king dies** The official goes to Jeanne who has a sad and melancholic look on her face. She gets happy when she hears that the king wishes to see her. Meanwhile, the religious men also enter the king's room. They cross themselves. One of the men starts reading the Bible. However, the king is very angry because he cannot see Jeanne. He tries to take away the Bible. However, he has no strength left. The minister comes out of the king's room and tells Jeanne that she can come to see the king now. She sees that the king has passed away. She is in despair.



**The next day, Countess Dubarry is banished** The next day, the minister enters Jeanne's room. He reads out loud the document he has in his hand: 'By order of King Louis XVI, Countess Dubarry will be banished and must leave immediately the palace.' Jeanne nods as a sign of acceptance. She hugs her servants and leaves the castle. As she is leaving, she sees the soldiers carrying the king's coffin. Jeanne runs to the coffin and hugs it but the minister asks her to leave the palace.



**People arise against the aristocracy** There is a big protest going on outside. Armand says to the others that he has promised to release Paillet and that he will keep his promise. The people start attacking the shops and the aristocrats. The officials open fire against the public to stop them. Chaos ensues in the city. The public and the officials fight against each other. Armand, pointing to Paillet's child, says to the crowds: 'His father languishes in the Bastille.' The crowds shout: 'To the Bastille!' The king, his wife, and his children surrender to the crowds. And they go down the stairs of the palace.



**Jeanne is given the death sentence** Armand is the president of the Revolutionary Tribunal. The committee requests Jeanne's death sentence 'according to article 2 of the law of March 10, 1792'. Everybody looks at Armand and waits for him to tell the decision. The crowds shout that she must die. Jeanne begs for her life. But Armand approves her death sentence. Even though Armand has let her be sentenced to death, he has an inner conflict and says to himself that he must save her.



**Armand recognizes Jeanne** Before Armand is about to leave, he recognizes Jeanne. Jeanne falls to her knees, begs him, and asks him: 'Why do you want to destroy me?' Armand says: 'I won't hurt you.' She wants to hug him but Armand does not let her. He goes outside and covers his face with his hands, presumably crying. Jeanne comes outside as well. She asks: 'Couldn't I make some of your wishes come true?' Armand says: 'I only wish that you would disappear forever from my memory.' Jeanne collapses in despair after having heard this.

**Armand is shot, and Jeanne is executed** 'The doomed aristocrats are led to the guillotine.' Armand secretly comes to the place Jeanne is locked up in. They hug each other. He says to her: 'I know you fear death. Flee disguised in my clothes. I will die in your place.' Countess Dubarry is called for execution. Paillet says that he will go looking for her himself. 'No one will take that pleasure from me!' Paillet sees Armand near Jeanne helping her to escape. He says to Armand that he is a traitor. He shoots Armand who tries to protect Jeanne from being shot by Paillet. Armand soon dies. People take Jeanne to the guillotine. The crowds cheer for her death. She is tied up. She is then



beheaded by the guillotine. The crowds cheer and applaud in wild enthusiasm. Her head is thrown to the public.

## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### **King Louis XV**

King Louis XV is the king of France. We first see him in person when he visits minister Choiseul and sees Jeanne. He is very impressed by Jeanne from the first moment he sees her. He makes her his mistress and soon becomes attached to her. His last wish when he is on his deathbed is to see Jeanne for the last time. However, his wish is not granted.

*Irresponsible:* The king is an irresponsible ruler. He does not care about the crowds he is ruling. The fact that the crowds are starving while he is leading a luxurious life does not bother him in the slightest. His irresponsibility and lack of care toward his subjects is the leading reason why the crowds protest frequently and ultimately revolt against the aristocratic class.

*Selfish:* The king is a self-interested man. One of the scenes where we find out about the king's policy is when the people protest in front of a bakery. The baker informs both the people and us the viewers that the king 'is the one who prevents the importation of cereals to protect his interests' and therefore the bread is very expensive. His not caring about his subjects and his preference to play frivolously with his mistress rather than deal with the problems of the public shows us the high degree of his selfishness.

### **Choiseul**

Choiseul is the minister and belongs to the aristocratic class. He is an intelligent but rather insidious man.

*Intelligent:* Choiseul plans for his sister to marry the king. His ambition is to gain even more status than he already possesses. One scene where his intelligence comes to the foreground is when he realizes that the king has taken an interest in Jeanne. He quickly sends the valet to her and makes her go away from the mansion. His aim, as he says to his sister, is to make all the women not come close to the king.

*Insidious:* Choiseul is an insidious man. This means he proceeds in gradual but subtle ways. One scene where we can witness this quality of his is when he does not let Jeanne see the king as he is about to die. He also gives the news of her banishment to her immediately after the king's death. His aims to increase the influence he has in the palace. He sees Jeanne as a threat and an obstacle to be gotten rid of. His insidious nature is also visible in his pretentious, pompous, and artificial body language and facial expressions.

### **Duchess of Grammont**

Duchess of Grammont is the Minister's sister. She has been planning to marry the king for a long time. However, the king is not truly interested in her. Like her brother, she is an intelligent woman, however, she is also insidious and jealous.

*Jealous:* When it becomes that the king is interested in Jeanne, she becomes jealous. Therefore, to defame Jeanne, she writes a satirical poem about how Jeanne has gained the favor of many men in the city and mocks her thus. She makes sure that the poem is distributed in the city of Paris and the crowds mock Jeanne.

### **Madame Jeanne Dubarry**

Jeanne is a young girl working in a clothing shop at the beginning of the film. She has a carefree, impulsive, and reckless nature. Moreover, she aspires to the wealth and luxurious lifestyle that the aristocrats are leading. Therefore, she climbs up the stairs of aristocracy and eventually becomes the main mistress of the king. However, the crowds are not happy with her luxurious lifestyle. In the

revolutionary tribunal, she is given the death sentence by her lover Armand. Armand tries to save her in the last moment, however, things do not go as planned and she is beheaded at the end of the film. The contrast between the laughing girl at the beginning of the film and the dead head at the end is striking and blood-chilling.

*Reckless:* Jeanne is a reckless person. She does not care about the consequences of her actions. She knowingly lies to Armand saying that she is going to work on a dress for the wife of the Spanish ambassador and does not feel guilty about what she has done. Her reckless and rather immoral nature also does not let her ponder about what she has caused. Armand and Don Diego fight because of her and Don Diego dies. However, she does not seem to be affected by this event in any way. She follows her impulses and seems to be led by her ambition to climb the stairs of the aristocracy.

*Ambitious:* Even though she seems to be a carefree person, she is ultimately ambitious. Firstly, she builds connections with Don Diego, then Guillaume Dubarry, and finally the king. She certainly enjoys the wealth, fame, status, and ease an aristocratic lifestyle provides. However, her excessive ambition does not go unpunished as she is beheaded by the staff of the Revolutionary Tribunal at the end of the film.

*Selfish:* Jeanne is a selfish person. She knows that Armand loves her but she cannot settle for him because he is not as wealthy as the aristocrats. When Armand finds out that she is the king's mistress, he demands that she choose between himself and the king. Jeanne chooses the king because she wants to keep on delighting in the luxurious, aristocratic lifestyle. Thus, she is ultimately concerned with her self-interest. Even though she loves Armand, her ambition for wealth stops her from seeing her mistakes such as her betrayal of Armand. Moreover, at the very end of the film, she accepts exchanging places with Armand so she will not be executed. This shows us that she views her life as more important than that of her lover. Thus, she is not as self-sacrificing as Armand is.

### **Armand de Foix**

Armand is Jeanne's lover. He is a young student at the beginning of the film. He is saved from being executed with the orders of Jeanne. Later on, he is promoted to lieutenant. However, he leaves his job because he sees the corrupt nature of the system and he cannot stand that Jeanne has become the mistress of the king.

*Idealistic:* He is an idealistic person. When he sees that the crowds are starving while the aristocratic class is living luxurious and extravagant lives, he decided to join the rebellious groups. The moment when he sees the vanity of all is when he witnesses the soldiers firing against the crowds protesting against Madame Dubarry in front of the palace. Armand realizes that for the king and the aristocratic class, the lives of the people do not matter in the slightest. After this realization and also later on finding out about Jeanne being the mistress of the corrupt king, he becomes the leader of the Revolutionary Tribunal.

*Loving:* Even though he gives the death sentence to Jeanne at the end of the film, this does not change the fact that he has always loved Jeanne. Despite her betrayal and ambitious nature, he has not given up on her. That is why he goes to the prison where she is staying to exchange places with her so that she can live. The fact that he can willingly sacrifice his life for her proves to us the greatness of his love for her.

*Courageous:* Armand is a courageous person. He leads the Revolutionary Tribunal and encourages people to rebel against the aristocrats. Moreover, his sacrificial act of exchanging places with Jeanne so she will not be executed is another sign of his courage.

### **Paillet**

Paillet is a Armand de Foix's friend. He is a shoemaker. However, he cannot afford to buy food for his family with the job he does. His wife is sick and starving. Later in the film, he is locked up in Bastille with the orders of Madame Dubarry.

*Rebellious:* He is a rebellious person. When the tax collector comes to ask him to pay money, he says: 'I prefer to enter the prison as a defaulter before my sick wife starves.' This shows us that he does not care about his own interest, but that of his family and he is not afraid to rebel against the authorities. The hardships he and his family endured turned him into an angry and rebellious man.

### **Guillaume Dubarry**

Guillaume Dubarry is a friend of Don Diego. He first meets Jeanne then he visits Don Diego. When Armand and Don Diego are fighting, he gives a sword to Armand so he can protect himself. Later on, he makes an offer to Jeanne and invites her to live with him.

*Opportunistic:* Guillaume Dubarry is an opportunistic man. When the valet of the king asks him to give Jeanne to the king, he easily accepts the offer when he finds out that he will be rewarded. Therefore, he does not have an emotional connection to Jeanne, rather he uses her as if she is a product to be exchanged for a good price.

*Abusive:* His abusive nature comes to the forefront in particular when he starts to have financial problems. He behaves harshly and rudely toward Jeanne. He uses her and makes her go to the minister to impress him with her beauty and make him sign a document. When she comes back empty-handed, he gets infuriated and is almost about to slap her. His abusive behavior makes Jeanne cry several times.

### **Don Diego**

Don Diego is the Spanish ambassador. During a procession, the horse he rides steps on and damages the box that Jeanne was supposed to take to Marquise de Belfort. Realizing the damage he caused, he pays for the hat in the clothing shop Jeanne works.

*Helpful:* It can be concluded that Don Diego is a helpful man. When he realizes that Jeanne will be berated by her boss, he decides to pay for the damage and asks Madame Labille not to punish Jeanne.

*Possessive:* After Jeanne spends the Sunday at Don Diego's mansion, he becomes rather possessive of her. He does not know that Jeanne has another lover called Armand. Therefore, when he sees Jeanne running to Armand at the opera ball, he gets infuriated and starts fighting with Armand. His quick possessiveness becomes a fatal flaw on his part as Armand wounds him and thus causes his death with a sword.

### **Madame Labille**

Madame Labille is the owner of the clothing shop where Jeanne works. She is a responsible lady who is meticulous about the work she does.

*Strict:* Madame Labille is strict when it comes to her business. She gets angry when she sees the working girls laughing and not concentrating on their work. She demands them to be serious about their work. Likewise, she gets infuriated when Jeanne brings back the damaged hat. From these scenes, we can conclude that she is strict and meticulous about her work and values principles and work over the emotions of people.

## **THEMES**

### **SOCIETY**

**Class** One important theme of the film is the differentiation between different classes. The aristocratic class lives a luxurious and corrupt lifestyle while the public can barely find any money to eat bread. Moreover, the upper classes seem disinterested in the difficulties that the public is facing and are merely concerned with their excessively hedonistic way of life. In particular, the king is responsible for the public's poor condition because as we hear from the baker in the bakery scene the king 'is the one who

prevents the importation of cereals to protect his interests.' Thus, rulers who do not care about the well-being of their subjects' interests pave the way for rebellion and uprising to occur.

## **POLITICS**

**Conflict** There are several conflicts between the public and the aristocratic class. The public demands rights and expects the king to focus on their problems instead of spending his time playing with his mistress and being solely concerned with his self-interest. However, the king and the aristocratic class do not value either the rights or the lives of the public. One instance of their indifferent or even cruel and merciless behavior can be seen when the soldiers open fire against the public because of the public protests against Count Dubarry. The public's wishes are not heard, rather they are suppressed through violent force. That is why the protests do not come to an end but get more violent in time. The public protests because they cannot afford bread. Then they revolt against the whole authority and free the prisoners including Paillet from the Bastille. Ultimately, they behead the aristocrats. It can be said that what is seen in the film is a reaction of the oppressed crowds to the indifferent and cruel authorities. It is naturally questionable whether the 'eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth' principle is ethical or just. But from the perspective of the public that has been suffering for decades, their behavior is justified.

**Revolution/Rebellion** People rebel against the king and aristocratic authorities because they do not accept their current living conditions. They perceive the king as incompetent and selfish. The aristocratic class lives extravagantly as they please while the poor and middle class suffers from malnourishment, poverty, and mistreatment by the authorities. This is the reason why the protests add up and their rebellion turns into a revolution, that is, a fundamental and sudden change in political power that occurs when the citizens revolt against the government due to perceived oppression (political, social, economic) or political incompetence of the rulers. The revolution means that the established order of the world will be upside down. The public regains its power and control and punishes the authorities with the death sentence. Thus, they create a new order out of chaos and establish justice on their own terms. The new order is one where the citizens have dominion and authority as opposed to the old system where the aristocratic class has special rights and thus gets special treatment because of noble birth.

## **JUSTICE**

**Punishment** 'Punishment, commonly, is the imposition of an undesirable or unpleasant outcome upon a group or individual, meted out by an authority'. The aristocrats are punished at the end of the film by the Revolutionary Tribunal. Their death sentences symbolize the public's victory against unjust and cruel authorities. Before the final uprising of the public, the authorities had unnecessarily used force against the public when they protested against them as in the case of the protest near the bakery and the protest against the king's extravagant and wasteful lifestyle with his mistress Dubarry. The public's collective consciousness and memory call for justice which is achieved by the punishment of aristocrats who had once led excessively lavish lives while ignoring the poverty, destitution, needs, and wants of the public.

## **RELATIONSHIP**

**Loyalty – Disloyalty** Can we say that Jeanne is ultimately loyal to Armand? From a certain perspective, it indeed seems so. Even though she lives 'adventures' with aristocratic men such as Don Diego, Count Dubarry, and king Louis XV, it is Armand that she truly loves. She saves Armand from the guillotine as she pleads to the king, and later on she makes sure that he is promoted to lieutenant. All these acts show us the viewers that she is in love with and loyal to Armand even though her attraction to the luxurious lifestyle of the aristocrats causes tensions and conflicts between her and Armand. Does Jeanne betray Armand? From the perspective of Armand, her acts can be considered to be a betrayal. Because at the very beginning of the film she lies to Armand about Don Diego, she tells him that she will work on one of the dresses of Don Diego's wife which turns out to be a lie. Later on, at the opera ball, Don Diego and Armand fight because of her, and Diego is fatally wounded by Armand because of Jeanne's thoughtlessness and recklessness. Furthermore, Jeanne officially becomes the wife of Count Dubarry's brother and the major mistress of the king. All these acts show us that Jeanne's love for wealth,

fame, and luxury is more powerful than her loyalty to Armand. Looking at the events from such a perspective, it can be said that she betrays Armand.

**Multiple partners** Jeanne has multiple partners in the film. Her partners are Armand, Don Diego, Count Dubarry, Count Dubarry's brother (as her husband), and the King. It can be said that these relations constitute polyamory, that is, the act of having intimate relationships with more than one person at the same time. A polyamorous person might have or might be open to having multiple romantic partners. People identifying as polyamorous may believe in open relationships while managing jealousy and reject the view that monogamy is a prerequisite for deep, long-term, loving relationships. Thus, Jeanne fits the description of a polyamorous person perfectly. Even though it can be said that she loves Armand the most, she is also open to the idea of having multiple partners. One reason why she prefers polyamory may stem from the fact that she sees it as an opportunity to climb the stairs of social hierarchy and elevate her class status. The king, likewise, is non-monogamous. He has multiple mistresses with whom he has flings and apparently does not have any moral scruples regarding such a life.

**Love** Even though Jeanne betrays Armand because of her ambition to achieve higher status, wealth, and power; it has been always been Armand whom she truly loved. Jeanne saved him from the guillotine, she made him promoted to lieutenant. Moreover, Armand always loved her too. Even though he gave her the death sentence, this was because of the pressure of the public. At the end of the film, he tried to save Jeanne by exchanging places with her. It can be said that the two have always loved each other. However, Jeanne's greed and excessive ambition for the aristocratic lifestyle initiated the series of events that, through a chain of causes and conditions, ultimately led to the deaths of both.

## PSYCHOLOGY

**Anger** Armand de Foix gets angry when he finds out that Jeanne is the king's mistress. He is both disappointed and angry as he learns that his beloved has betrayed him and chosen the king and luxurious lifestyle over his love. Because of his anger, he leads the Revolutionary Tribunal and even sentences Jeanne to death. However, he still loves her, so he tries to save her from being beheaded at the end of the film. Armand's anger is mirrored by the public's collective anger. The public is angry at the authorities' extravagant lifestyle just like Armand who is disgusted by the indifference, and cruelty of the aristocratic class. The public demands justice for themselves. They wish to be able to afford necessities such as bread and simple food. They are naturally angry as they see the gap between their condition and that of the aristocrats. Their anger is the cause of the revolution to come.

## FLAWS

**Greed** Jeanne's flaw is her greed. Even though she has an occupation and a lover, she is ultimately not satisfied with her 'possessions'. That is the reason she goes to meet Don Diego and accepts Count Dubarry's offer to live with him later on. Still, Count Dubarry has soon his financial problems and after hearing the king's valet's offer she decides to become a mistress of the king. All these decisions that build upon one another are a result of her greedy temperament and will for a luxurious and aristocratic life. Thus, she is finally led to the guillotine because of her greed. If she had chosen to stay with Armand instead of stumbling upon this dangerous adventure, she could have saved both her life and that of Armand.

## QUEST

**Explore** Jeanne's life can be seen as an exploration of the lifestyle of the aristocratic classes. At the beginning of the film, she is leading a middle-class lifestyle. Because of her ambitions to reach the status of the aristocratic class, she first goes to the mansion of Don Diego and gets to know him. Later on, she gets to know Count Dubarry, and finally king Louis XV. Her exploration of the palace and the lives of the aristocrats does change her personality in certain respects. For instance, she orders Paillet to be arrested and locked up in Bastille because he is against her luxurious and extravagant way of life. This behavior does seem to be at odds with the compassion she feels for Armand and her efforts to save him from political troubles. At the end of her exploration, she realizes that her journey has been in vain as she is

led to the guillotine to be beheaded. Furthermore, she realizes that the only person who truly cares for her is Armand. However, her fate is sealed. Her greed and ambition cost her ultimately her life.

## **CHANGE**

**Transience** The relationships that Jeanne has, are of a transient nature. First of all, we witness the loving relationship she has with Armand. But when she meets Don Diego and finds a chance to experience the aristocratic lifestyle, she decides also to have a relationship with him. This relationship, however, does not last long because Don Diego gets fatally wounded in a duel by Armand. Count Dubarry makes an offer to Rosita that is hard to refuse as he offers her a luxurious, aristocratic life. And so Jeanne has a relationship with Count Dubarry. Later on, the king's official asks Count Dubarry to give them Jeanne so she can be a mistress of the king. Thus, her relationship with Count Dubarry also does not last long. While she is the mistress of the king, she still loves Armand. So even though she has a non-monogamous lifestyle, her eternal love belongs to Armand. After the king's illness and death, her ties to the aristocratic court are broken and she is on her own. From these series of relationships, we can their transient and impermanent nature.