

MARIANNE. No.

CHARLOTTE. Because Joan of Arc was kinda crazy. I'm not crazy, I'm fed up, I *had* to kill him, it was a civic duty...that felt fucking awesome. I mean the *feel* of it? Of righteous vengeance is just...floral, like a blooming of power and rightness and—goddammit it's what sex must feel like.

MARIANNE. I mean...

CHARLOTTE. The way that man looked at me with my knife in his chest. I was this close to him, his breath on my lips, leaning into him, and I said—I actually said this—"You. Die. Now." But that's not crazy that's...just very literal.

MARIANNE. I mean...

CHARLOTTE. Did I tell you some guy's painting my portrait? That's kinda cool. Wait till Jacques sees that. Fuck. And people are reading my letter? The last line might have been a bit much but I didn't have Olympe's help.

MARIANNE. Yes it's circulating in a pamphlet. Widely. But...

CHARLOTTE. What.

MARIANNE. There's also some...celebration...of Marat.

CHARLOTTE. *Wait what?*

MARIANNE. Now this was bound to happen, but some idiots are trying to turn him into a martyr.

CHARLOTTE. Some? I mean...not *many*, not *some*. A faction. A small but vocal faction? Right?

MARIANNE. ...right.

Hard pause.

CHARLOTTE. Well. Sometimes history judges slowly. My trial is tomorrow. It'd be nice to see a familiar face. I am preparing my Steely Look of Unwavering Calm, but I may need a high-five before I go onstage.

MARIANNE. You mean on trial.

CHARLOTTE. Same thing. All the world's an audience.

MARIANNE. Are you quoting Olympe at me?

CHARLOTTE. Am I? Oh god. Never tell her this.

MARIANNE. I would never.

They share a smile.

And I'll be at the trial. You're an example for us all to keep fighting, do what we have to, even if it means being very...literal.

Charlotte lets the upset overwhelm her—tears even.

CHARLOTTE. Would you. Please fight for me too. I don't think I finished the job.

MARIANNE. I don't know if we'll ever finish it.

CHARLOTTE. But I don't even know if I helped. *Like at all.* What if I just made it worse? Oh god, am I crazy? Did I do the right thing? I mean I know technically murder is wrong most of the time but—oh god this is not—oh god—

MARIANNE. As a wise and weird woman once said: We may not know the rightness of our revolutions nor the heroes of our stories for generations to come.

But I think you're one of them. And I will carry you into every fray I can find.

The sound of approaching men unlocking steel doors.

They're coming for her.

CHARLOTTE. OK tell people—tell them—I don't know. I'm not great with words. Tell Olympe to find the words.

MARIANNE. She found these.

Marianne hands her a slip of paper.

CHARLOTTE. For me? Really? Oh thank you, *thank you*.

MARIANNE. Don't thank me. Or her. It was literally the least she could do.

CHARLOTTE. No it's not. It's everything. Absolutely everything.

MARIANNE. *(Re: her new line.)* Now when you say that... Look up, find your light, and say it loud.

CHARLOTTE. OK. Um. I'm really scared.

MARIANNE. Of course you are. And that's OK.

CHARLOTTE. I'm so scared.

MARIANNE. I know. But don't let anyone else know it. You're brave, and ready, and not alone. Good work, young assassin.

CHARLOTTE. Thank you. Thank you.

Beat. The ending builds out of Charlotte's preparing for death.

OK.

OK.

Across town Olympe holds her pen, trying to tame her ideas.

Across town Marianne holds her final letter to Vincent.

And Marie listens for trumpets and caresses her ribbons.

MARIANNE. CHARLOTTE. OLYMPE. MARIE.

OK. OK. OK. OK.

Blackout.

End of Act One

ACT TWO

ONE.

*Olympe starts this scene in a rush,
writing in her study with furious inspiration...*

OLYMPE. OK, yeah, this is going to start moving really fast now. Marat's death has made things very bad, very quickly. The revolution has turned violent, anything done or said against the Republic is now treason and treason is punished by death. There are mobs in the streets, Marat's a martyr, Charlotte's on trial, and I've finally found something to write about—!

Marie reads over her shoulder.

MARIE. Marie! OhMyGod, is that *me* Marie? The *Queen* Marie? The *Me* Queen?!

OLYMPE. Yes, can you not yell *all* of your revelations as you have them.

MARIE. Gasp! Sigh! Retort! Oh that seems like *such* the right move.

OLYMPE. Well the declaration was a bust and you're really interesting.

MARIE. Right?

OLYMPE. Back to plays. Fiction I can fix. Reality is way too hard to write. At least drama has some structure. We're headed somewhere clear. And I have to admit that this play might be good. Like actually good.

MARIE. And it's really about me? That's hilarious!

OLYMPE. Actually, it's a very serious epic historical political drama with a few songs that will be a vindication for generations! Because it will last five hours.

MARIE. *Ugh.* But the title. Something cute, something that says "She's Innocent!" Perhaps, "*The Lovely Queen*" or maybe, "*Braveheart*."

OLYMPE. NO. It has to be sweeping and profound. Something like... "*France Preserved*"!