

START

MARIANNE. Stay. Your story's in good hands here.

Pause. Charlotte likes the sound of that. She stays.

CHARLOTTE. I could stay for a sec.

OLYMPE. Great. Now. My question is about plot.

MARIANNE. Me too. You're just gonna walk up to him and stab him? I mean just, stabstab?

OLYMPE. And because I'm seeing sequel potential, I'm worried about killing off our heroine so quickly.

MARIANNE. Agreed.

CHARLOTTE. No. I have to do this. I'm the only one with enough guts and cuteness to get away with this, so I will curl my hair, strap a steak knife to my thigh, use my sweet voice to infiltrate his house, stare him down and kill Jean-Paul Marat.

With said steak knife.

In his bathtub.

MARIANNE. His bathtub?

CHARLOTTE. He lives there. Skin condition.

OLYMPE. Ew.

CHARLOTTE. No, it'll be great. Intimate. Bloody. The water swirling red, the nudity. It'll be so...dramatic.

OLYMPE. Aha!

CHARLOTTE. *Not like that.*

OLYMPE. Drama wins!

CHARLOTTE. *I said dramatic not theatrical.*

OLYMPE. All the world's an audience.

CHARLOTTE. All the world's a mob.

MARIANNE. Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference.

CHARLOTTE. You know what? Never mind, I shouldn't have come.

OLYMPE. Charlotte, stop.

CHARLOTTE. No, no, the stories you trot out are distractions, and placating the rich, and full of *yelling and bosom and terrible dialogue!*

MARIANNE. *(Terribly serious.)* THEN WHY THE HELL ARE YOU HERE.

You know that a good deed needs a good story or else it might vanish like nothing. ever. happened.

You know that or else you wouldn't have shown up. You also know that her words are dangerous, she is putting her life on the line—

OLYMPE. I am?

MARIANNE. To tell a story that is good and good for the world—

OLYMPE. My *life* is on the line?

MARIANNE. She is risking everything for her art. So be nice to the playwright, because she holds fiction like you hold that blade and I know her weapon is sharper.

CHARLOTTE. Than a knife?

MARIANNE. Than any metal you've got. You tell me which one you want running the world.

Pause. Olympe smiles at Marianne.

Charlotte looks at both of them...changes her mind.

CHARLOTTE. I mean.

Sorry for the yelling.

MARIANNE. Uh-huh.

CHARLOTTE. And the aggressive entrance.

MARIANNE. Uh-huh.

CHARLOTTE. It's just. You two might be the first women I've ever like...liked. You're...interesting in like a...human kinda way.

MARIANNE. Thank you, young assassin.

OLYMPE. Such a good title.

CHARLOTTE. Do you mind if I hang here for half an hour until my appointment? You can maybe write my line while I practice my stabbing and scary eyes.

OLYMPE. Also a good title.

MARIANNE. Wait. You have an appointment to murder Marat?

CHARLOTTE. Well *he* doesn't know that's what it's for.

So don't let me get in your way. I don't know how this whole "drama" thing works. What do you—like—do all day?

OLYMPE. Well. I guess I...think up interesting people with enormous backstories and lots to lose and force them into action—

Marie enters, looking lovely and startled.

MARIE. Marie enters! Is she late? Or lost? What were they talking about? Was it her? It's always her. Or is she being her again? It's a confusing time. Hello. Marie... (*Whispered like it's a bad word.*) Antoinette.

CHARLOTTE. *Holy crap you're Marie-Antoinette?*

MARIE. *Isn't it exciting I'mSoFamous.*

MARIANNE. Infamous.

MARIE. *Famous.*

MARIANNE. Infamous.

CHARLOTTE. Wait. *You're the real Marie-Antoinette?*

MARIE. *I am so real!* Sigh. Sometimes I say it instead of doing it. It *used* to be so good to be real. Or did they always hate her? Did she mention her general confusion about this? She has no idea what's coming next, except that one day she woke up in a palace and went to sleep in a prison—not exactly prison—it was one of their lesser bedrooms—with *gunmen outside and no dessert!* The fear in her children's fancy eyes, trying to explain it to the dogs. The pressure, the amount of sudden exposition. It's all too much for Marie!

MARIANNE. And everyone watching her.

OLYMPE. Is there anything I can do for you, Majesty?

MARIE. I'm not even a "Majesty" anymore, the jerks.

MARIANNE. You're all Citizens now.

MARIE. But who wants a Citizen for a queen? That's ridiculous. (*To Olympe.*) I'm here for a rewrite.

OLYMPE. Oh god.

MARIE. Yes girl I need some help. First step: Make me Majesty again!

CHARLOTTE. Marat's the one who wanted to toss the monarchy. It all goes back to him.

OLYMPE. Exactly. There can be real reform *without* torching centuries of history.

MARIE. *Thank you.*

MARIANNE. But, come on, the royals aren't ready to change.

MARIE. No thank you.

MARIANNE. You aren't. You're dancing while Rome burns.

MARIE. First: It's Paris. Second: I had people dance *for* me. Third: We used to like me, the whole country would celebrate my birthday. How did it all turn into this rudeness and...murder.

MARIANNE. There's your title.

MARIE. Title? Whose title? I have so many titles.

OLYMPE. Not that kind of title.

CHARLOTTE. A play title. For a play.

MARIE. A *play* play? Which play? I'll play!

MARIANNE. It's her play. She's writing it.

OLYMPE. Yes. Olympe de Gouges, Your Majesty. Young playwright, activist, you might have heard of my moving political dramas—

MARIE. That's cute, no, I've heard that you're the only lady playwright left in Paris.

MARIANNE. And you need to rewrite your history because it makes you look bad.

MARIE. Most of it *does* make me look bad! You're hilarious.

MARIANNE. Not on purpose.

MARIE. Which is still hilarious! (*To Charlotte.*) You're pretty. And young. That must be fun. What are you?

CHARLOTTE. An assassin. It is fun.

MARIE. And who is your funny friend?

MARIANNE. Marianne Angelle. Not funny, not your friend, and we need to talk about colonization in the Caribbean right now.

MARIE. Caribbean? Ohmygod I *love* you guys.
Wait. Are you a...? Like a real live...? LikeASlave?

MARIANNE. No. I'm a free woman. My husband and I came to France to demand full and recognized civil and political equality. We want slavery abolished across the entire French Empire.

OLYMPE. *I am so for that.*

CHARLOTTE. Yes We Can!

MARIE. You know it's the funniest thing, when I walked in here I could have sworn that you were my servant—

MARIANNE. I AM A FREE WOMAN OF MEANS LIKE YOU AND YOU AND YOU. I AM NO ONE'S SERVANT, I'M JUST STANDING NEARBY.

CHARLOTTE. I like her so much.

OLYMPE. She knows.

CHARLOTTE. (*To Marianne.*) I like you so much.

MARIANNE. I know.

(*To Marie.*) And you, Citizen, should know right now that the men and women of Saint-Domingue, who are dying in the sticky heat of your greed and oppression, the slaves who have suffered under your lash, have started a revolution of their own.

MARIE. Two revolutions? At once? Someone should have called ahead.

MARIANNE. It's the same revolution, the same rights, the same freedoms, just applied to your slaves instead of your peasants.

MARIE. I don't remember any of the other colonies acting this way.

MARIANNE. We know you need us. You people love our sugar, and coffee, and indigo—

MARIE. Indigo! For ribbons!

MARIANNE. So we have leverage. A country of our own and you get your coffee.

CHARLOTTE.

OLYMPE.

MARIE.

Amazing.

Damn right.

Your coffee is really good.

MARIE. I wish there was something I could do to help. But. I mean I couldn't even start a youth fitness program at the palace, and don't get me started on my rebranding ideas—*which were good*. I mean what *is* a fleur-de-lys? A sad flower? A terrible fork? No one listens to me unless I say something stupid, then it's the talk of the damn town.

MARIANNE. I feel your pain.

MARIE. Thank you.

CHARLOTTE. That was sarcasm.

MARIE. I realize that now.

OLYMPE. WAIT. Wait. I've got it. This is it. This is *it*!
THE QUEEN. CAN BE. IN THE PLAY.

CHARLOTTE.	MARIANNE.	MARIE.
<i>My play? My play?!</i>	Oh <i>hell</i> no. What?	I <i>would</i> likely make
	Uh-uh.	it more interesting.

MARIANNE. Olympe, no. You were writing about revolution not royalty.

OLYMPE. Now wait, you said to write the intimate stories, that's what this would be. A woman at the edge of history, with everything to lose and nowhere to hide—

MARIE. Can it be a musical?

OLYMPE. Under all that vanity she's still just a person.

MARIE. Just a *fabulous* person.

OLYMPE. I mean it's not *her* fault that she's the queen.

MARIANNE. *Can we please not call her that anymore.* She's not my queen and she shouldn't be yours. She bankrupted your country!

MARIE. I mean we reduced a lot.

MARIANNE. The people have no food, and she had a palace!

MARIE. So did the dogs—mini ones—hilarious.

MARIANNE. She is everything wrong with a class of people so vacant-hearted that they can't see the horror of their own luxury.

MARIE. OK I had no choice in becoming royalty, it was thrown at me. And by that I mean a mountain of free stuff and undeserved compliments. What would you do? *You'd take them. They're free.* But just to be very clear, I did *not* say that bit about the cake. That was out of context. I thought I was ordering lunch.

CHARLOTTE. Cake for lunch?

MARIE. Uh, *all* lunch comes with cake.

MARIANNE. *And all cake comes with sugar and all sugar comes from families dying in the drowning heat a world away.* Figurehead or actual head it's *hers* that should roll, not ours.

Marie is silent. Marianne didn't mean to go that far.

MARIE. (*Sincere.*) I know what most people think of me. It's not very

nice. And I deserve...some of it. And I have a feeling I might die sooner than later, but I would very much like Later to know that I was a real person. Who bled and gave birth in a closed room with two hundred people watching so give me a little credit here. I just... I care. I care so much about my people and my country. I just need better press. You can do that for me Madame De Gouges. I was hoping that you would. I would be honored to be in your play. *(To Marianne.)* And try to earn your respect. Via meaningful connection...and minor revisionism.

OLYMPE. I know I shouldn't but I kind of like her.

MARIANNE. She's not worthy, Olympe. She doesn't belong with us. She is not a revolutionist.

CHARLOTTE. Yeah, what would your declaration be? "We hold these *jewels* to be self-evident."

MARIE. Well they are.

CHARLOTTE. So shiny.

MARIE. Did you say declaration? Like the Americans? They do *great* declarations. I know Thomas Jefferson if you want any advice. He'd like you. *(To Marianne.)* Actually he'd like *you*.

MARIANNE. *I feel like that should make me really mad. You need to go.*

OLYMPE. Wait—What if she could help us?

MARIANNE. Help us? Help *us*? No.

MARIE. I mean sometimes a revolution needs a woman's touch.

CHARLOTTE. Or you know...stabstab.

MARIANNE. It does need a woman's touch, but that is not a soft thing, Citizen Cake.

MARIE. *(Showing her dominatrix side.)* Oh. I know it's not. Not at night, not in secret, not when you're a tall, red-haired American diplomat in my goddamn country. Then it is a hard hand that knows your every weakness, and is firm and red and shuts you up and makes you sit and you better do what it says or else you're damn right there'll be a revolution.

Pause. The others are surprised and impressed.

MARIANNE.
I mean...

CHARLOTTE.
She is kinda awesome.

OLYMPE.
Yeah I really like her.

FINISH