

ACT TWO

ONE.

START

*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*"!

MARIE. Sounds delicious.

OLYMPE. (*A better title.*) OK maybe... "France Saved."

MARIE. Oh that's nice. I'm thinking "Ooh, is France an ingénue tied to a train track? And what are trains?"

OLYMPE. (*The extended title.*) "France Saved; or, A Tyrant Dethroned." There we go, that's it.

MARIE. De-WhatNow? *Dethroned?* Who's dethroned?

OLYMPE. I want a country that owns itself and I don't think we can do that with a monarchy so this play—

MARIE. *Silence.* No queen? That is not—no—wait. Do I die in the end?

OLYMPE. Well I haven't written the end.

MARIE. You said "we're headed somewhere clear, drama has structure." Well where the hell are we headed and why is it not a beach?

OLYMPE. Look—

MARIE. No *you* look. I'm the main character of this thing, right? So let's make me stay queen and not die, OK? *Let's do that.*

OLYMPE. Sometimes the story tells itself.

MARIE. THEN YOU BETTER TELL THIS DAMN STORY TO BEHAVE.

I have precious little time to force history to like me. *Now tell me what you're writing.*

OLYMPE. I don't have time to go back, I'm halfway through the story.

MARIE. *Aren't we all. Tell me.*

Pause.

OLYMPE. Setting: The queen's private chamber in the palace on the eve of the fall of the monarchy.

MARIE. That's a bad day to set a romantic comedy.

OLYMPE. It's not a romantic comedy.

Marie whines, Olympe pushes through it.

You're desperate. You're plotting any way to uphold the crumbling royal institution while the revolutionary forces are at your door.

MARIE. (*Like she's talking to a scary movie.*) Get away from the door Marie!

OLYMPE. Then a woman comes to you, to convince you to let go of the old ways and embrace the new, to compromise. Her name is Olympe.

MARIE. Hold the throne. You're writing about yourself now?

OLYMPE. It's a character.

MARIE. Named after you.

OLYMPE. Well yes but—

MARIE. Isn't that confusing? I'm confused. I hate when theatre confuses me.

OLYMPE. I call it "Meta Theatre." The point is to be a little confusing.

MARIE. I hate it. I already hate it.

OLYMPE. You don't hate it.

MARIE. The play is trash!

OLYMPE. *The play could save us both.*

Pause.

MARIE. *Comment? (French: "How?")*

OLYMPE. By showing *you* learning a goddamn lesson for starters. By showing people that revolutions needn't be so bloody. That they can be kind and creative. I'm telling you, Your Majesty, This play. Will be. Important.

MARIE. If it's not a romantic comedy nobody will come.

OLYMPE. I'll add a butler.

MARIE. Hilarious!

OLYMPE. Now, the first act ends with Olympe convincing the queen to work *with* the revolutionaries to create a Constitutional Monarchy that truly embraces Liberté, Egalité—

MARIE. Sororité.

OLYMPE. Yes. The country is saved by its women.

Beat.

MARIE. That I like. Keep writing. And if you want...the production may borrow my wigs.

OLYMPE. I'll make sure to thank you in the program.

END

Marie suddenly hugs Olympe like a child hugging a mother.