

THE REVOLUTIONISTS

Character Breakdown



Olympe de Gouges (The Playwright): a passionate, idealistic, and often pig-headed playwright and activist. Her excitability sometimes gets in the way of her better judgement. A pacifist, she prioritizes personal freedoms above most things. *Name is pronounced: OH-lahmp deh GOOzsh*

Historical info: (Born in 1747 in Montauban, France, Olympe began her prolific career as a playwright in Paris in the 1780s. A passionate advocate of human rights, she was one of France's earliest public opponents of slavery. Her plays and pamphlets spanned a wide variety of issues including divorce and marriage, children's rights, unemployment and social security. De Gouges welcomed the French Revolution but soon became disenchanted when equal rights were not extended to women. In 1791, in response to the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, de Gouges published her Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen, in which she challenged the practice of male authority and advocated for equal rights for women. Her increasingly vehement writings, which attacked Maximilien Robespierre's radical Montagnards and the Revolutionary government during the Reign of Terror, led to her eventual arrest and execution by guillotine in 1793.



Marianne Angelle (The Spy): A savvy and tough free woman of color from the Caribbean. She is a spy for the Haitian Revolution working with her husband. She is the sanest one in this group of women and the moral center of the play. Marianne is the only fictional character, though she is based on some very real women. *Name is pronounced: mahREE-ahn Ahn-GEL*

Historical Info: Marianne represents all the Black women who protested slavery in the French colony of San Domingue (modern day Haiti). While evidence exists that women played a large role in the Revolution, they have been ignored by white, male historians for centuries. Our depiction of Marianne is based on two women who were central figures in the Haitian Revolution. Abdaraya Toya, a Dahomey warrior before being enslaved and sent to San Domingue, was a healer and midwife who taught hand-to-hand combat and commanded her own brigade, and Suzanne Sanite Belair, a free black woman who fought alongside her husband in the Haitian Army. When Sanite was captured by Napoleon's army in 1802, she refused to kneel or have her eyes covered at the time of execution forcing them to look her in the eyes as she exclaimed, "Liberty, no to slavery!"

THE REVOLUTIONISTS

Character Breakdown



Charlotte Corday (The Assassin): A very serious bookworm from the French countryside hardened by righteousness. Intense, fearless, and relentless in the way only a twenty-year-old can be. Determined to change the world by killing a monster.

Historical info: Born into a poor but noble family in southeast France in 1768 and raised in a convent after her mother's death, Charlotte began attending political meetings as a teenager. She was a Girondist, a moderate of the Revolution who supported a constitutional government without the violence of the radical Jacobins. After the Jacobins began executing the clergy and closed the convent she was raised in, Charlotte travelled to Paris and promised to disclose the names of Girondist leaders to Jean-Paul Marat. She gained access to his home and stabbed Marat in the heart with a kitchen knife while he was bathing. She was immediately arrested, found guilty and executed four days after the murder by guillotine in 1793. While Marat became a martyr for the Revolution, Charlotte was dubbed "The Angel of Assassination" and lives on in numerous works of art, poetry, and literature.



Marie Antoinette (The Queen): The flighty and fascinating former Queen of France. Bubbly, graceful, and opinionated while also totally unaware and unintentionally rude. Never had a real friend.

Historical Info: Born in Austria in 1755, Marie was married to Louis the dauphin of France at only fourteen. Considered a representative of her native land by the people of France, she was unpopular from the start. She ascended to the throne 4 years later alongside her inattentive and timid husband. Due to the King's personal weakness and political nullity, Marie was held up by the Revolution as the picture of extravagance and everything that was wrong with the monarchy. Without an heir to the throne (because neither King nor Queen was entirely sure how to consummate their marriage), rivals began to circulate scandalous reports that the Queen was involved in numerous affairs. These rumors persisted even after the birth of her daughter in 1778 and the long-awaited heir three years later. Though she intervened little in political matters, she was stronger and more decisive than the King and became the main target for political agitators. Despite her best efforts and various attempts to flee, the monarchy was overthrown in 1792. She was imprisoned for over a year before she was executed by guillotine in 1793.