

From SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE ADVENTURE OF THE ELUSIVE EAR

Dramatic

MARIE CHARTIER, Female (late 20s-30s)

My game, as you call it, is a very deep one, Mr. Holmes. Being a criminal mastermind is difficult enough. Do you have any idea how hard it is being a female criminal mastermind? As you so perceptively observed, I am brilliant, ruthless, and beautiful. Not only that, I am the daughter of the celebrated Professor Moriarty, but do you think anyone in the world of organized crime would give me the time of day? Pah! It is a glorified boys' club filled with greedy and ignorant men. Would they let me into the drug trade? No. Gambling? No. Steel, oil, finance? No. Every door was closed against me. And so at length, I resolved to carve my own path...into the world of art. Naturally, I went first to Paris, and made the acquaintance of Georges Seurat, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Paul Gauguin, all of them poor, largely unrecognized, with chaotic personal lives and assorted addictions, yet all of them utterly devoted to their art to an obsessive degree. Of course they are men, and like most men, easily manipulated by a heartless seductress like myself. I left each one of them reeling with hope and desire, then travelled to the south of France, to the little village of Arles, where Vincent Van Gogh became my pet project. I made certain that he sent only his weakest paintings to his brother Theo, while I kept the rest. As for the others, when any of their work raises a ripple of interest, I simply have my agents take it off the market. You see, the quality of their work is one thing, but it is, after all, merely smudges of color on canvas. So where is the value? The profit? I put it to you that it is not in the paintings themselves, rather it is their stories, their tortured, unhappy, miserable lives that will make their paintings almost priceless in the very near future because these painters possess precisely what upper-class, wealthy collectors want, the one thing they can't buy—an authentic life.

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