



Lucette Dumas, former housemaid to Madame de Villon

I served in the de Villon household for over seven years. I knew Madame, of course, but I also knew Mademoiselle Éloïse before the trouble began. She was always gentle, always calm — even when others gossiped about her. When she lost her career over that tragic birth, it broke her. But she never once spoke of vengeance. If anything, she turned inward, spent her time reading, thinking.

I saw her at the dinner party that night. She poured the tea, yes — but so did others. The servants were rushed, the kitchen chaotic. Madame de Villon had many enemies, and many secrets. But everyone looks at Éloïse because she is easy to blame. A woman alone, too clever, too quiet.

I cannot say who poisoned the tea. But I do know this: Éloïse Boucher is not a murderer. She is a scapegoat.

A portrait of Doctor Étienne Mercier, an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark brown coat over a white cravat and a dark waistcoat. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a serious expression.

Doctor Étienne **Mercier**, Enlightenment physician and salon host

I have known Mademoiselle **Boucher** for five years. She began attending my salon shortly after her release from prison. Unlike most who emerge from such injustice with bitterness, Éloïse sought reason. She read Montesquieu, Locke, even Voltaire — and not as a dilettante, but as a student.

She spoke often about justice — not vengeance. She believed a rational society must offer even its worst criminals the right to defend themselves. It is cruelly ironic that she now stands accused in a court that fears intellect more than evidence.

I will not pretend to know what happened at Madame de Villon's table. But I will say this: poison is the weapon of the secretive and the fearful. Éloïse is neither.



Baron Armand de Villon, widower of Madame de Villon

My wife, rest her soul, suffered for years under the shadow of that woman. Éloïse pretended to be a healer — a modern woman with modern ideas. In truth, she was reckless, arrogant, and cold. She presided over the death of our first child, and yet showed no remorse. None.

I always believed she was dangerous. When she began publishing letters under false names — mocking noble families, questioning the Church — I knew it was only a matter of time.

That night, I saw her watching my wife with a strange calm. Too calm. Madame sipped her tea, turned pale, and collapsed. And Éloïse stood silent. That is not the behavior of a healer. That is the silence of a woman who has finished what she started years ago.



Sister Geneviève, abbess of St. Madeleine's Convent

Éloïse was once a bright young woman, gifted in healing, yes — but also prideful, stubborn. She rejected our guidance, refused confession, and scoffed at prayer.

After her imprisonment, she came to me once, asking for charity. I gave her food and reminded her that forgiveness begins with

humility. She only quoted some foreign philosopher about justice and “liberty of the soul.” No repentance. No faith.

I do not say she killed Madame de Villon with her own hands. But I do believe she allowed the darkness in her mind to flourish. She replaced God with reason. And that is always the beginning of ruin.