

Gallery Walk

Name: _____

MOTIVE: The accused lost her source of income due to slander by the victims family

Instructions:

You will walk around the room and visit different stations, each with physical evidence, witness statements or testimonies from the trial of Éloïse Mercier. Your job is to read the evidence and answer the questions from the point of view of your assigned Enlightenment thinker.

Physical Evidence:

1. Does the poison bottle prove guilt, or could it have another explanation?

2. Should one suspicious item—like a poison bottle—be enough to take away someone’s rights or freedom?

3. If no one saw Éloïse use the poison, can the court still punish her?

4. What evidence in this station supports your Philosopher’s ideas?

5. What does your philosopher believe about evidence and punishment?

Character Statements #1:

1. Lucette Dumas calls Éloïse a “scapegoat.” What does she mean by that, and why does she believe Éloïse is being blamed unfairly?

2. Doctor Étienne Mercier says Éloïse believed in justice, not revenge. How does his testimony show a different side of her than what others say?

3. What evidence in this station supports your Philosopher’s ideas?

Character Statements #2:

1. Baron de Villon strongly believes Éloïse is guilty. What reasons does he give, and do you think his emotions affect how he sees the situation?

2. Sister Geneviève criticizes Éloïse for turning away from religion. Why do you think she connects that with the idea of guilt or danger? Is this fair?

3. What evidence in this station supports your Philosopher's ideas?

Witness Statements:

1. What does Jean-Paul Lefevre say about Éloïse's behavior on the day of the incident? Does his statement make her seem more or less guilty? Why?

2. Claudine Marceau, the kitchen maid, says the tea was already made before Éloïse arrived. Why is that detail important to the case?

3. Henri Dubois says Éloïse bought belladonna, a poisonous herb. Do you think this is strong evidence against her, or could there be another explanation?

4. Victoire Leclerc saw Éloïse enter the estate alone with a bundle. Why might that be suspicious, and why might it also be harmless?

5. What evidence in this station supports your Philosopher's ideas?

Expert Witness:

1. What evidence does Dr. van Loon use to challenge the claim that Madame de Villon was poisoned with arsenic?

2. Why is it important that he mentions other natural poisons like wolfsbane? What point is he trying to make?

3. How does Dr. van Loon's testimony reflect Enlightenment values such as science, reason, or skepticism?

4. Based on your assigned Enlightenment thinker's beliefs, how might they respond to Dr. van Loon's argument? Would they agree or disagree with his use of scientific reasoning in a legal case? Why?
