

## To Steal a Diamond

Do you smell something? Maybe not... well, let me describe it to you. It is a smell that can strike fear into the bravest of souls. It frequently accompanies war, and its source is a close friend to death. Yet, without its source, we could not live. It is the acrid smell of smoke. In the city of Paris, this odor has become all too familiar since the city is in upheaval. Freedom is the cry that rises as the French Revolution rages. Unfortunately, with the king's execution a month ago, a simple desire for liberty has spiraled into a power-grabbing frenzy. In the mayhem this brought on, the crown jewels had disappeared from the palace. Death is now stalking anyone who was in service to the king. But who am I? That, at the present, is not important. The events on the streets of Paris are much more crucial.

First, let us meet the brave Lady Violette Labarr. At this time, she is making her way, dressed as a peasant, to the Le Cafe Gourmand. Inside, she sits down at a table with a middle-aged man and starts whispering, trying not to look conspicuous. Her words are startling. "I know where the crown jewels are! I was informed of your plan to smuggle noblemen out. This could pay the way." The man, a Monsieur Clovel, nods his head. "I had hoped to have such news from your father, the Duke, but I understand he is in hiding. Thank you for the information. I will make sure you make it out of the country." Violette replied, "I could not bring the jewels to you because it would be too dangerous, so I will take you to them. Meet me at the warehouse on Saint Jerome Boulevard at 10 o'clock tonight." Then she hurried out of the cafe and disappeared.

At 10 o'clock that night, two cloaked figures met at the warehouse on Saint Jerome Boulevard. The taller of the cloaked personages started to fiddle with the lock, but the noise of a roaring riot interrupted their work. In the blink of an eye, Violette and Clovel found themselves surrounded by angry rioters. Someone must have recognized them as part of the nobility. The crowd was shouting at Clovel. During the pandemonium, Violette slipped into the warehouse, shocked to find the door open so easily. In the dim light, she could see the figure of a woman bending over a crate. The woman pulled out the most beautiful blue gem Violette had ever seen. It must be the king's French Blue! At that moment, the woman glanced up and saw Violette. For a split second their eyes locked, and then, with a sly smile, the woman pocketed the gem and slipped into the night. All was lost. The jewels had vanished with the mysterious woman.

What happened to Violette? Although her father and Monsieur Clovel were brutally executed, Violette managed to escape to London. As she was walking through the streets one day, Violette saw someone who looked familiar. At that moment, the woman saw her, as well. With a coy smile, the woman pulled from her purse a beautiful, blue gem. That is where my account must end. From the night since I filched that gem, it has caused me nothing but trouble. Yes, I, Cecilia Crichton, am the mysterious woman who thwarted Violette's plan and stole the biggest blue diamond in the world.