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Historical

The Last Rendezvous
Anne Plantagenet
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A select few literary greats had the privilege of loving so deeply, so intensely, that their lives were never again mundane. Inspired by her lover Henri de Latouche, a prominent man of letters in early nineteenth-century France, Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, a gifted poet and actress, experiences the joy and pain of romantic passion.

A fictionalized account of Marceline's life, *The Last Rendezvous* explores the depths of her relationship with Latouche, a physical and intellectual attraction that exceeds the emotional impact of her other affairs, including the lukewarm friendship with her husband Prosper Valmore. A woman ahead of her time, Marceline is an early feminist with the courage to distance herself from the confines of a restricted society to pursue the dictates of her heart and soul. An independent nature, along with the ability to acknowledge her feelings toward the men she meets in the course of her career, sets her apart from her contemporaries.

Anne Plantagenet's novel is written with controlled precision and attention to detail. Translated from the French by Willard Wood, this is an enthralling narrative of a famous woman who had the audacity to pursue male-dominated professions during one of the most difficult and politically tumultuous periods in the history of France. Researched like a biography, the book exposes Marceline's innermost thoughts, much like the pages of a diary. The result is a feeling of intimacy, allowing the reader inside the mind of an ardent poet who lived long ago.

Featured at the end of this novel is a selection of Desbordes-Valmore's verse, translated by Louis Simpson, a winner of the Pulitzer Prize. Marceline was the only woman that acclaimed French poet Paul Verlaine placed in a prestigious or "accursed" group that included Victor Hugo, Charles Baudelaire, and Alfred de Vigny. These sincere and haunting words from the past provide a touching backdrop for Plantagenet's beautiful love story.

Already released in France, *The Last Rendezvous* won the 2005 Prix du récit

biographique of the Académie internationale des arts et collections. Plantagenet resides in Paris and has published several other works of fiction and nonfiction, including a biography on Marilyn Monroe. Fascinating and absorbing, this talented writer's book is a conscientious expression of her own twenty-first-century attitudes toward the poet; it is educational as well as entertaining.

Julia Ann Charpentier