



The Passion of Mademoiselle S.

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A literary treasure: the recently discovered letters that chronicle the passionate affair of a young woman in Paris in 1928

While helping a friend clear out an old apartment in Paris, diplomat Jean-Yves Berthault came upon a leather portfolio that contained a collection of handwritten letters. After reading the first one, Berthault realized that he had stumbled upon an extraordinary correspondence—a charged and passionate epistolary love affair that brought to mind the French classics *The Story of O*, *Justine*, and *Delta of Venus*. He began to piece together clues. The letters were from Simone, a well-to-do, unmarried Parisian woman, to her younger, married lover, Charles. Written between 1928 and 1930, they tell the story of an illicit love affair that sparked a sexual awakening for both lovers. As the affair intensifies, Simone becomes obsessed with Charles, even as he begins to grow more distant. As her hunger deepens, she pushes him beyond all boundaries into dangerous and forbidden realms, in an effort to keep him enthralled. With each broken taboo, Charles submits—until their last fateful encounter.

The Passion of Mademoiselle S. is a tour de force. In language that is by turns elegant, impassioned, and surprisingly graphic, these love letters are a portrait of a sexual and psychological obsession. Berthault's notes on the period add dimension and context to the correspondence. But it is the voice of Simone—that of a sensual, vulnerable, and curiously modern woman—that comes through most vibrantly and echoes down the centuries.

Praise for *The Passion of Mademoiselle S.*

“The steamiest . . . text ever.”—*Le Parisien*

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