

A friend in prison

On June 18th 1815, Napoleon lost the great battle of Waterloo, and in the end was sent back to prison and then banished to the island of Saint Helena, where he stayed until his death. The King returned to Paris. Villefort married Renée Saint-Méran, and, feeling perhaps that people in Marseille knew too much about him, he moved with his wife to Toulouse, another town in the south of France.

Danglars and Fernand, whose plan had put Edmond in prison, were afraid that he would come back to take his **revenge** one day, so they both left Marseille. Danglars went to live in Spain, and Fernand joined the French army.

Edmond's father died soon afterwards, and kind Monsieur Morrel paid for the funeral. Now Mercedes was all alone. She spent her days crying for the young man she loved so dearly, with no hope that she would ever see him again.

A year after the King's return to France, the prison **inspector** came to visit the Château d'If. The **governor** welcomed him to the prison, saying with a smile, 'I'm afraid the prisoners will all tell you the same thing – they're **innocent** and they want to be free! But we *have* got two interesting prisoners, one mad and one dangerous.'

'Well, I'd like to see them before the others,' said the inspector.

Taking two **guards** with them, they went down to the underground cells, in the darkest and coldest part of the prison.

'This is the dangerous one,' whispered the governor, as the guards unlocked the door of Edmond's cell.

The young man jumped up in delight when he realized an inspector was visiting him. 'At last, Monsieur!' he cried. 'Now you can help to get me out of here, because I'm innocent of any crime!'

revenge

something that you do to hurt someone because they have hurt you

inspector

a person whose job is to visit a place and check that all is well

governor

a person whose job is to manage a prison

innocent

having done nothing wrong

guard

a person whose job is to watch prisoners and stop them from escaping

The inspector and the governor smiled at each other. 'What did I tell you?' whispered the governor.

'Leave it to me, young man,' said the inspector. 'I can't promise anything, but I'll see what I can do.'

As Dantès was thanking him gratefully, they left his cell.

'This is the mad one,' whispered the governor, as the guards opened another door. 'He's an old **priest**, who thinks he has some **treasure** hidden somewhere. He'll offer you money to help him find it!'

When they entered, they saw an old man sitting on the floor, who spoke to them at once. 'How lucky you've come!' he cried. 'I have something very important to tell you.'

'Here it comes,' whispered the governor to the inspector.

'There is a lot of treasure waiting for me in a secret place, and if you help me, I'm ready to give you a large part of it.'

'You know your prisoners well,' said the inspector to the governor. To the priest he said, 'I'm sorry, Father, I can't help you.'

'Well!' replied the priest angrily. 'If you don't want my treasure, then I shall keep it. Goodbye!' And he turned his back as the governor and the inspector left his cell.

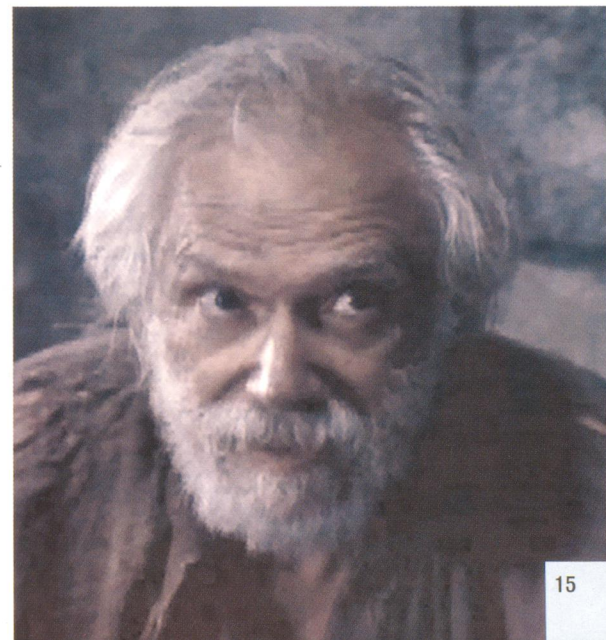
For several weeks after this visit, Edmond lived in hope. Surely the inspector would help to set him free! But when nothing happened, and the weeks became months and years, he was more miserable than ever. He knew that he was innocent, but he feared he would have to stay alone in this dark cell for the rest of his life. And he was only nineteen!

priest a person who works for the church

treasure

something expensive, for example gold, silver or valuable stones

'I have something very important to tell you.'





He lay awake on his hard bed.

But one night, as he lay awake on his hard bed, he heard a noise in the wall next to him. He listened carefully. 'It's another prisoner, digging a **tunnel!**' he thought excitedly. Using pieces of a broken plate, he too began to dig. Suddenly a stone fell out of the wall, and a grey head appeared in the hole. It was the priest, Father Faria. He had dug a tunnel all the way from his own cell to Edmond's.

Now a much happier time for Edmond began. He could visit Father Faria when he liked, using the tunnel, and together they discussed all kinds of things. Over the years the priest taught Edmond everything he knew; all about plants and natural medicines, about languages and the way of life in different countries, and about famous writers from the past. Soon they loved each other like father and son. Sometimes the priest talked of his secret treasure, which he said was hidden on the island of Monte Cristo, but Edmond always replied, 'Your teaching is the only treasure I want, Father.'

Edmond had another reason to be grateful to the priest, because Father Faria, after listening intelligently to the story of Edmond's arrest, was able to explain why it had happened.

'You see, my friend, Danglars wanted your job as captain of the *Pharaon*, Fernand wanted to marry Mercedes, and Villefort – well, he just wanted to save his own skin! His father – Monsieur Noirtier – was one of Napoleon's close allies and he knew

tunnel a long hole that goes through or under something

that you'd seen the old man's name on the envelope that you brought with you from Elba. These three wicked men are your enemies – they are the ones who sent you to prison.'

'I'll take my revenge on them one day!' said Edmond angrily. 'They'll be sorry for what they did to me!'

Many years passed in this way. But then one day, the priest became very ill. Just before he died, he gave two yellowish pieces of paper to Edmond. 'These tell you how to find the treasure on the island of Monte Cristo,' he said. 'It's yours now, my boy. Find it and use it well, and remember me.' That night he died, with Edmond sitting sadly at his bedside.

The next morning, when the guards found the old man dead, they put him in a **sack**. Edmond, who was in the tunnel, heard one of them say with a laugh, 'We'll take him to the **graveyard** tonight.'

Suddenly Edmond thought of a way of escaping. When they had gone, he took the body out of the sack and put it in his own bed in his cell. Then he returned to Father Faria's cell and lay down inside the sack on the old man's bed. He waited there all day.

That night the guards returned. They picked up the sack, which was surprisingly heavy for a thin old man, and carried it outside. Edmond could hear them laughing, as they tied something to his feet. He could smell the salt in the air and hear the sea crash against the rocks. Perhaps the guards would start digging soon.

But then they picked him up, one at his head and one at his feet. 'One! Two! Three!' they counted, and let go of the sack. Edmond suddenly found himself flying through the air, pulled downwards by the heaviness at his feet. With a crash he fell into frighteningly icy water, which closed around him. The guards had thrown him over the castle walls, with large stones tied to his feet – the sea was the graveyard of the Château d'If.

sack a large strong bag

graveyard a place where dead people are put under the ground

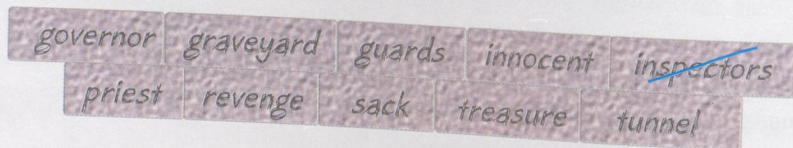
READING CHECK

Match the first and second parts of these sentences.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>a When the King returns to Paris ...</p> <p>b Danglars and Fernand ...</p> <p>c When Edmond's father dies ...</p> <p>d Mercedes is alone and thinks that ...</p> <p>e The governor of the Château d'If thinks that Edmond ...</p> <p>f He says that Father Faria ...</p> <p>g Father Faria digs a tunnel ...</p> <p>h Edmond tells Father Faria ...</p> <p>i When Father Faria dies ...</p> | <p>1 leave Marseille.</p> <p>2 Edmond will never come back.</p> <p>3 is a dangerous prisoner.</p> <p>4 Edmond finds a way to escape from prison.</p> <p>5 is mad because he talks about being very rich.</p> <p>6 about his arrest and Father Faria explains why it happened.</p> <p>7 Villefort finally marries Renée Saint-Méran.</p> <p>8 to Edmond's cell, and they become friends.</p> <p>9 Monsieur Morrel pays for the funeral.</p> |
|---|---|

WORD WORK

Match the words on the prison wall with the underlined words in the sentences.



- a** One day, one of the king's men who visit to see that all is well comes to the prison. inspectors
- b** He and the man who tells the prison workers what to do visit the prisoners.
- c** It is terrible when a man is doing nothing wrong and he goes to prison.
- d** Father Faria is a man of the church.
- e** Edmond and Faria secretly go to each other's cells through a long hole in the ground.

- f** Father Faria often talks about some gold, silver and valuable stones that he knows about.
- g** In the evening, the men who watch the prisoners come to take Faria's dead body.
- h** Edmond escapes from prison in a large bag.
- i** At the Château d'If, the sea is the place where dead bodies go.
- j** Thinking about his enemies, Edmond decides that he wants to have a time when he hurts those who have hurt him.

GUESS WHAT

What do you think happens in the next chapter? Tick the boxes.

- a** Edmond swims to ...
- 1 Marseille.
 - 2 the island of Monte Cristo.
 - 3 another island.
- b** The captain of a ship finds Edmond and ...
- 1 gives him a job as a sailor.
 - 2 kills him.
 - 3 takes him back to prison.
- c** Edmond ...
- 1 finds nothing on Monte Cristo.
 - 2 finds Father Faria's treasure.
 - 3 goes to Marseille with no money.

